

Algiers bombing kills two, wounds 32

ALGIERS (AP) — A bomb exploded Friday morning in a market in the suburbs of the Algerian capital, killing two people and wounding 32 others, the government security services said.

Residents of the neigh-

bourhood, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the bomb was extremely powerful and the number of victims could be larger than what the security forces announced.

Friday's attack followed two explosions late Thurs-

day afternoon, which killed two people and injured 12 others.

The first bomb Thursday afternoon exploded in central Algiers, wounding 10 civilians. In a shoot-out that followed the explosion, the perpetrator, as

well as a passer-by, was killed by police.

The second bomb also exploded Thursday in the Bab Al Oued neighbourhood, wounding two people. No one claimed responsibility for the attacks.

German minister scheduled to meet Sudanese rebel leaders

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Germany's junior minister for foreign affairs, Helmut Schaefer, has announced that he plans to meet with leaders of Sudan's main rebel movement after talks in Khartoum with top government officials.

Mr. Schaefer, a minister of state, told a press conference in Khartoum late Thursday that he was leaving the city to meet leaders of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

Speaking at the German ambassador's residence in Khartoum, Mr. Schaefer added that he also planned to talk to officials of Operation Lifeline Sudan over the means of improving the flow of relief materials to people affected by years of civil war in southern Sudan.

In Khartoum, Mr. Schaefer

held talks with President Omar Bashir, the head of the military junta. Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail

and National Assembly Speaker Hassan Turabi, who is seen as the Islamist eminence grise of the regime.

Mr. Schaefer said his discussions with government officials had concerned the implementation of a peace pact signed last year by the regime and some splinter rebel factions. He added that he was visiting in the context of missions by officials and parliamentarians from the European Union (EU) to become acquainted with the situation in all domains.

Such domains included human rights, and Mr. Schaefer disclosed that he had tackled Khartoum officials on alleged slavery practices and the deprivation of civil liberties in Sudan. He stated that Sudanese officials denied such charges and had said they welcomed visits by German and other EU delegations to discuss the real situation.

Sudanese leaders also told Mr. Schaefer that a proposed

new constitution guarantees democracy, freedom of political association and belief and individual liberties, but in the context of a federal government system. The German official said that federalism was the most suitable system for countries with ethnic, religious and cultural diversity.

The mainstream SPLA, led by Colonel John Garang, has been fighting since 1983 to free the animist and Christian south of Africa's largest nation from domination by the Arabised, Islamist north.

The junta, backed by Mr. Turabi's National Islamic Front movement, which has been officially banned like all other parties since President Bashir toppled an elected government in 1989, has in recent weeks been advocating a single-party system embracing different tendencies — snubbing demands for a return to multi-party politics.

Rafsanjani says West gave mass destruction weapons to Iraq

TEHRAN (AFP) — Former Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani criticised the United States and Europe on Friday for supplying Iraq with the weapons of mass destruction at the heart of the current crisis.

"Your hands are dirty and you are implicated, because it is you yourselves who have been putting the most destructive kinds of weapons in Iraq's hands," he said as he led weekly prayers at Tehran University.

"Not only Iraq but also the experts and the Western countries are war criminals," Mr. Rafsanjani told a crowd of several thousand.

"If there is a fair court or an impartial international body, Iraq will be judged a war criminal for having used chemical weapons, and you, too, for having put these weapons in its hands," he said.

Mr. Rafsanjani, who stepped down as president in August, remains an influential figure in Iran as a top advisor to spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Egyptian FM to visit seven African countries

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa will visit seven African countries from March 3-12 to strengthen their relations with Cairo, the Foreign Ministry announced Friday.

The trip will take Mr. Musa successively to Niger, Senegal, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Mali, Ghana and Chad, it said.

The top Egyptian diplomat is also due to attend a meeting of the foreign ministers of the member states of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) from Feb. 25 to 27 in Addis Ababa.



TURKISH POLICE ARREST PROTESTER: Police arrest a protester Friday in Istanbul after several hundred people protesting against a possible U.S. military strike on Iraq clashed with Turkish police after prayers in Istanbul's Beyazit Mosque. Police made a number of arrests and several people on both sides were hurt in the scuffle (AFP photo)

British intelligence lists 'suspect' Arabs in U.K.

From The Guardian

MIS IS targeting hundreds of Arabs living in Britain, who face the prospect of detention without trial in the event of military strikes against Iraq.

It has identified individuals suspected of "hostile intent," some of whom are likely to be deported, well-placed sources said.

Others will be told they are being watched, in the hope they will avoid political agitation. MIS and police Special Branches have drawn up a list

of names, said to be in the "lower hundreds," of suspect Arabs.

Few Iraqis have been given visas to enter Britain since the Gulf war, and the sources insist there would be no "mass deportations." Decisions would be taken case by case.

The government is anxious to avoid the fiasco during the Gulf war when, on MIS advice, more than 50 innocent Arabs were interned as terrorists. They included Abbas

Cheblak, a Palestinian writer and human rights campaigner resident in Britain for 16 years, and a respectable chairman of an insurance company. Deportation notices were served then on a further 167 Iraqi, Jordanian, Lebanese and Yemeni nationals.

The detentions, allegedly based on out-of-date MIS files, provoked a storm of criticism.

The Special Immigration Appeals Commission Act, which has received the Royal Assent but has not yet become

law, sets up an independent tribunal of judges who will rule on national security cases. It replaces a procedure whereby the home secretary alone decides on deportation following secret hearings by "three wise men" appointed by him.

John Wadham, director of Liberty, the civil rights group, said: "There is a grave danger of repeating the mistakes of last time, and the detention of people innocent of any involvement with the Iraqi regime."

Saddam's government cannot be overthrown — Uday

BAGHDAD (AFP) — President Saddam Hussein's government cannot be overthrown, the Iraqi president's elder son Uday said in an interview with the Japanese news agency, Kyodo, published Friday.

"This system [of government] will not be toppled, just as a human being cannot have wings to fly like birds," Uday said in the 40-minute exclusive interview with Kyodo.

U.S. congressmen have been calling for the overthrow of President Saddam in the showdown over U.N. weapons inspections, but Uday recalled there had been rumours of an overthrow during the 1991 Gulf war.

When bombed radio and television stations stopped broadcasting, Uday recalled that some said the government had been overthrown while others said the president had been killed.

"What followed was a lot of murders, massacres, rapes, and robberies carried out by traitors," said Uday, who was wearing a dark blue suit and still moved with some difficulty following an assassination attempt more than a year ago.

"At the time some analysts expected Iraq to be divided into three parts: a Kurdish one in the north, a pro-Iranian one in the south and the central government in the central part of Iraq," he said.

"But when President Saddam Hussein appeared on TV, traitors and chaos vanished quickly," he said.

"This system of government will never be toppled because it is based on the people's spirit. The Iraqi people have remained united because of this system of government," he said.

He also said he hoped U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, who arrives here Friday, would find a solution to the crisis over U.N. arms inspections.

"We also welcome all efforts that would safeguard the sovereignty and dignity of Iraq against the American savage attack," Uday said.

"We hope that the visit of Mr. Annan will be to the level, which we aspire for in terms of establishing justice."

Uday was also asked about Baghdad's reluctance to allow unfettered U.N. weapons inspections of Iraqi presidential sites.

"Could the Japanese allow

the inspection of the emperor's [palace]?" he reportedly answered. "Iraq has already fulfilled all its obligations towards the U.N."

The U.N. Special Commission, "however, always say that they still have other issues to investigate," he added. "They should act in a clear manner and deal with issues in a case-by-case manner."

"The Iraqi children in particular, and the people in Iraq in general, are the victims of these ongoing and endless sanctions," he said.

Uday, who is chairman of the Iraqi National Olympic Committee and who runs the newspaper Babel and Youth Television, dismissed as "rubbish" reports he would succeed his father as head of state.

Mr. Annan left Paris on Friday for a meeting with President seen as a last-chance effort to avoid U.S.-led attacks on Iraq.

Military deployments by the United States and Britain and the sight of U.N. workers pulling out of Baghdad ahead of possible airstrikes have added urgency to U.N. chief Annan's trip, already underscored by war-ready comments by U.S. leaders.

EU ready to normalise relations with Iran

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union (EU) will take the first step Monday towards normalising its relations with Iran, which have been on ice since the Islamic regime was implicated in terrorism in Germany last year.

Diplomats said EU governments have reached a consensus on the need to respond positively to Iran's attempt at reconciliation under its new president, Mohammad Khatami.

"It does not mean we have abandoned our concerns on terrorism or on weapons of mass destruction but we need to have a policy that is responsive to developments in Iran," said a senior British official.

The precise terms for the new relationship will be thrashed out by foreign ministers from the 15 EU countries at their monthly meeting on Monday.

The EU suspended its "critical dialogue" with Iran last April after a German court ruled that senior Iranian officials had been involved in the organisation of the 1992 assassination of four Kurdish dissidents in a Berlin restaurant.

The bloc's senior diplomats were returned to Tehran in November but ministerial contacts remain banned.

The decision by the EU to

upgrade ties with Iran is likely to aggravate tensions with the United States, which has attempted in vain to persuade its European partners to join it in a policy of isolating the Islamic Republic.

Washington is expected to rule shortly that three foreign petroleum companies which have concluded a joint energy deal with Iran, including France's Total, are subject to sanctions under U.S. law.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Accused Algerian Islamist goes on trial in Naples

NAPLES (AFP) — An Algerian accused of organising Islamist networks in Europe and shipping arms to activists back home refused to attend his trial as it got underway in Naples Friday. The defendant, Djamel Lounici, 36, is under house arrest. Mr. Lounici is a member of Algeria's banned Islamic Salvation Front. He was detained in Italy in May 1995 on an international arrest warrant issued by France, which seeks his extradition.

Iraqi Kurds agree to exchange prisoners

CAIRO (AP) — Two rival Kurdish factions controlling parts of northern Iraq have decided to exchange prisoners and set up joint panels to deal with humanitarian work, one of the groups reported. The decision was announced after a meeting Thursday between representatives of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, KDP radio reported Thursday.

Israel frees bedouin suspected of plotting Hamas attack

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli-Arab suspected of planning a bomb attack for Hamas was freed on Friday after almost one month of detention, judicial sources said. Sharif Abu Ghani, a bedouin from southern Israel, was arrested last month along with another bedouin and accused of embarking on a suicide bombing mission. Mr. Ghani was eventually freed after 25 days without any charges being pressed after the second suspect was released last month. After their arrest on January 26, Israeli Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said they had been about to commit an attack, but security officials later cast doubt on his allegations. No explosives or other weapons were found in the men's cars and both were driving south, away from Jerusalem, when they were stopped at Israeli police checkpoints.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10The Hammerman
16:30 French Cartoon — Canon the Adventurer
17:00French doc. — Cago
18:00Square One TV
19:00Le Journal
19:15 Science Magazine — The Discovering Magazine
19:30News headlines
20:00Cinema, Cinema
20:30Prism
21:10Drama — Time Trax
22:00News in English
22:30Feature film: "The Bonfire of the Vanities"
23:59Comedy — "The Respected Family"
00:30End of T.V.

PRAYER TIMES

04:51Fajr
06:09Sunrise: Duha
11:49Dhuhr
15:00Asr
17:30Maghreb
18:47Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 624853/624811.
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 568404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Sunny to partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail, scattered showers are expected in the southern parts of the Kingdom, and winds easterly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of showers, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman04/15

Aqaba12/22
Deserts03/16
Jordan Valley11/21
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 14 Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 43 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Mazharah 820425
Dr. Wisam Hazyin748563
Dr. Khalid Abdo657129
Dr. Munther Al Khatib839868
Firas pharmacy5661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh250080
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Salah Safarini987565

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department566111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 657777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs5661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority5680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn641281/6
Alkileh Maternity, J. Amn642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital566727/9
The Islamic Abdali566126/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh775111/26
Army, Marks891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Amal Hospital5674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital09/983323
Zarqa National Hospital09/900560
Ibn Sina Hospital09/986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital09/990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital02/275555
Greek Catholic Hospital02/27275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital02/247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital03/314111

on other flights is obtained on telephone (44) 52700 or (44) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15Aqaba (add) (RJ)
08:25Damascus (RJ)
09:30New Delhi (RJ)
09:55Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05Beirut (RJ)
10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:30Colombo (RJ)
15:00New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20Cairo (RJ)
17:40London, Berlin (RJ)
19:45Frankfurt (RJ)
05:15Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights
09:30Al 'Arish (PF)
13:15Riyadh (SV)
15:05Vienna (OS)
18:00Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:30Athens (OA)
22:35Cairo (MS)
23:30London, Beirut (BA)
23:35Amsterdam (KL)
03:25Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00Aqaba (add) (RJ)
06:20Beirut (RJ)
10:00Frankfurt (RJ)
11:30Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00Milan Madrid (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
12:10Paris (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:30Cairo (RJ)
20:05Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
20:20Larnaca (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights
14:15Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:45Riyadh (SV)
15:50Vienna (OS)
19:00Dubai (EK)
23:35Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:35Amsterdam (KL)
03:00Athens (AZ)
04:20Rome (OA)

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

Agriculture ministry working on development strategy

By Shehab Makahleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Agriculture is working to develop a comprehensive agricultural plan to better serve development projects throughout the Kingdom and enable Jordan to become self-reliant by increasing food production, according to ministry sources.

The sources added that water shortages would be a major stumbling block in the path of economic and sustainable agricultural development in Jordan.

Meanwhile, Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the ministry, in cooperation with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and other concerned authorities, should draw up national strategies and programmes designed to promote agricultural development, regulate the consumption of water, and raise the level of efficiency in handling water issues.

Mr. Khreisha said water plays a key role in development programmes and schemes.

"People should conserve water, because it is becoming an increasingly precious resource, vital among other things to food production," he said.

He said that the Kingdom relies heavily on rainfall as a major water source.

"We are keen on accomplishing our objective by providing the necessary legislation and conditions to adapt to the economic and environmental challenges," said the minister, adding that "the ministry is supporting the decentralisation process as a first step towards bolstering the agriculture sector."

Mr. Khreisha said pasture lands will be developed in cooperation with the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

"We will begin developing the pasture lands at a cost of JD6.6 million and we will expand pasture reserves to cover 750,000 dunums in order to regulate grazing, which has led to a decrease in animal feed production," he stated.

He added the ministry encourages farmers to increase livestock production and will offer them vaccines for their animals, expand services to cover all regions and improve agricultural inputs.



PRINCESS HONOURS FORMER RED CROSS OFFICIAL: Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan confers the Golden Medal of the Jordan Red Crescent upon former British Red Cross President Sylvia Linterik in appreciation of her efforts. Princess Sarvath, deputy chairman of the Jordan Red Crescent, held talks in London Friday with British Red Cross officials. (Photo by Bughost)

Mulki blames Israel for low trade between Jordan, Palestinian areas

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hani Mulki has accused Israel of being responsible for the low level of trade between Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule areas.

Speaking at the start of talks with a delegation led by Palestinian Minister of Trade Maher Masri, Dr. Mulki said Israel does not respect nor is implementing the Paris Agreement on facilitating the flow of goods between the two sides.

Pledging that Jordan will continue to pursue efforts to bolster economic and trade ties with Palestine, Dr. Mulki said the current meeting is to focus attention on how to liberate the Palestinian economy from the hegemony of the Israeli economy and how to remove barriers between the Palestinian self-rule areas and Jordan.

Dr. Mulki said trade links between the two sides will be strengthened after the reconstruction of the King Hussein Bridge on the Jordan River, which will allow the passage of a greater volume of products. He said the Ministry of Public Works in Amman has already prepared the designs for the new bridge, which will be financed by the Japanese government.

Dr. Mulki said he will discuss Palestinian-Israeli trade and the construction of the bridge with Israeli Minister of Trade Natan Sharansky.

who is expected in Amman on Monday.

Israel still controls the only two bridges connecting Jordan to the Palestinian territories, and according to official statistics, Palestinian exports to Jordan last year totalled \$15 million, while the Palestinian territories imported \$30.5 million worth of Jordanian goods.

For his part, Dr. Masri said the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Jordan are determined to bolster ties in all fields and remove barriers impeding trade.

He noted that Jordan, Israel and the PNA will soon hold a meeting to review trade links and means of facilitating the flow of trade across the bridges.

Man believed to be oldest Jordanian dies

AMMAN (AP) — A 123-year-old, believed to be the Kingdom's oldest man, has died in his southern hometown after three years of poor health, the Arabic daily Al Rai reported Thursday.

Mohammad Alayyan Katamin died Wednesday in the 'Ein Al Beida village near the town of Tafi-

la, 200 kilometres south of Amman, according to the paper.

It said Katamin, a farmer, was born in 1875. He was bedridden for the last three years after a fall that fractured his foot. He never had any health problems, except when he underwent surgery to remove an enlarged

prostate gland in 1976, the paper said.

It said Katamin was the oldest of 10 other men and women — all over 100 years — living in the same village. The 10 are still alive.

Katamin is survived by a 47-year-old daughter, whose name was not revealed, the paper said.

King sends message of appreciation to former Royal Court chief Khasawneh

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein has sent a message to former Chief of the Royal Court Awn Khasawneh in reply to his letter of resignation, expressing appreciation of Dr. Khasawneh's services.

In his message, the King said Dr. Khasawneh

offered valuable services and performed his duties with sincerity and honesty. King Hussein wished him success in his new endeavours.

Dr. Khasawneh had sent the King a letter expressing his wish to be relieved of his post, which he filled

for two years. Dr. Khasawneh said he was most honoured to have served the King and the country for the past 23 years in government posts.

Noting that he wished to be relieved from his former position to turn his attention to his private

affairs, Dr. Khasawneh expressed hope that the King would accept his resignation.

Dr. Khasawneh was succeeded by former Foreign Minister Faysal Tarawneh, who left his former post in the recent government reshuffle.

Necessary precautions taken to deal with results of possible U.S. strike against Iraq — Majali

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has taken all the necessary precautionary measures to deal with any situation resulting from a military strike on Iraq, according to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

Addressing a group of journalists taking part in a workshop in Amman organised by the Med Media Network of the European Union in conjunction with the World Bank's Economic Development Institute, Dr. Majali

said Jordan's reserves of foodstuffs and oil products are sufficient for more than four months.

The Saudi Arabian government has said it is ready to meet the Kingdom's oil needs if necessary, said the prime minister, adding that the question of cost has not yet been discussed.

Dr. Majali noted that the port of Aqaba can handle imports of 12,000 tonnes of

oil per day, in addition to other imports.

Expressing hope that war would not occur because of its devastating consequences on Jordan and the Arab World at large, the prime minister highlighted the ongoing efforts of His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan in support of a diplomatic solution to the Iraqi crisis.

But, he noted, should Iraq be seriously affected in terms of trade and tourism, the Kingdom is still suffering from the outcome of the 1991 Gulf war, which saw 1.5 million people taking refuge in the country, in addition to the return of 350,000 expatriates, he added.

Dr. Majali stressed that the government will not allow any refugees to come to Jordan in the event of an attack on Iraq and has the capability to do so.

He reiterated Jordan's support for the Iraqi people, saying that Jordan is against all forms of violence. However, he defended the government's ban on demonstrations and protests in Jordan to display such support.

He also denied that police brought dogs into Al Hussein Mosque to quell protests by worshippers, charging that these were false rumours and stressing that the government respects the sanctity of mosques and places of worship. He accused certain hostile elements of infiltrating the worshippers for the sake of harming Jordan's security and stability.

Dr. Majali also reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinian people and criticised the Israeli government's procrastination in implementing peace accords. He described the situation as extremely dan-

gerous.

He said Israel has not implemented agreements that it has signed with Jordan and trade relations have been hampered as a result of the Israeli government's policies.

The prime minister also welcomed 320 youths who arrived on board a Japanese ship touring the world with messages of friendship. He outlined Jordan's endeavours to establish peace and security in the region and its efforts to promote the national economy.

On board the ship are youths from 13 countries who have been touring different parts of the world over the past two months. Jordan's tourism authorities have organised a tour of tourist and archaeological sites in southern Jordan and meetings with local youths within a programme that also includes folklore performances.

Performing artists union holds elections amidst controversy over regulatory law

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Union of Performing Artists yesterday held its first election since becoming a legally recognised entity and elected Malik Maadi to lead the new union for the next two years.

But the question on the general assembly's mind was not who would win the elections, but who changed the articles of the new law governing the organisation prior to their enactment in the Lower House.

The new law, enacted by the 12th Parliament, gave the artists legal standing as a union, but in its articles prohibited membership to all non-Jordanian nationals, which effectively prevents them from practising their trade unless they receive a special permit from the Ministry of Culture and pay 20 per

cent of all contracts. The regulation affects 61 members, many of whom have been active members of the organisation for years.

"As the general assembly, this is not the law we agreed upon," says Sawsem Darwazah, a director and producer. "We did not agree upon the law that we now have, and we don't know how it got changed."

Nasser Omar, an actor since 1979 and twice a recipient of the First Actor Award granted by the Jordan Theatre Festival, said that after nearly 20 years of membership and employment as an actor in the country, he will now have to work "as a foreigner."

"I will have to pay a percentage of each contract I win, and I will have to obtain a kind of work permit, which will be granted now by the Ministry of Culture rather than the artists' board."

The original law was scripted by an informal 12-member council and was approved by the general assembly before the organisation received its legal status. A sub-committee followed up the law with the Parliament. Somewhere in between, members said, the original law got scuttled.

Members added that after lobbying for 17 years to gain official status, the follow-up committee may have made concessions in order to avoid further delay in enacting the law. However, they said, follow-up committee members deny any knowledge of the article.

"We are surprised by this article," says Jamil Awad, a candidate for the 380-member syndicate. "This means that other Arab artists will not be able to work here, and Jordanian artists will not be able to work in other Arab countries easily because most artists'

syndicates open their membership to all Arab nationals on the basis of reciprocal treatment."

Candidates and members said there was a general consensus that the law should be changed, but speculated that any alteration of the law, which must be approved by both Parliament and the government, could take another three to four years.

"I think the law was drafted to be in harmony with the Constitution," said Mr. Awad. "I would try to change it. But changing it all depends on how it is regarded in relation to the Constitution."

The union also elected a ten-member council that groups together representatives of actors, directors, singers, playwrights, composers and technicians. The names of the new members were not available at press time.

Agriculture, tourism ministers sign agreement to develop Petra region

By Shehab Makahleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An agreement for developing the Petra region was signed Thursday by Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha and Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Bittaji.

Mr. Bittaji told the Jordan Times that the project for developing agricultural resources is part of the second tourism project in the Kingdom covering the Petra, Wadi Musa, Karak and Wadi Rum areas.

"This project, the Petra component, is important for

southern Jordan as well as the Kingdom," said Mr. Bittaji. "The total cost of the Petra component will reach JD500,000, 65 per cent of which will be covered by the World Bank while the remaining part will be covered by the Ministry of Agriculture."

In a statement to Jordan Television, Mr. Khreisha said the agreement provides for planting trees in four areas in Petra as well as constructing a modern irrigation system for trees and terraces for valleys.

"We will construct water

cisterns and plant an area of 1,500 dunums in the Petra region with various types of trees and maintain old irrigation channels in the Wadi Musa area to beautify the region as a whole," said Mr. Khreisha.

"This year, about half a million saplings will be planted in the region and privately owned lands will be developed by the government. Free saplings will be distributed to the people to grow," he added.

The minister said Petra is an important tourism attraction in the Kingdom and should be developed to accommodate the rise in the number of tourists to the region.

Army's bread lines pass cost-benefit test

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Having started "with a little help from a friend," the Jordan Armed Forces (JAF) is saving a significant sum of money and at the same time satisfying a meal-time preference of its officers and enlisted men and women.

For about 20 years, the JAF had been supplying its forces with pan-bread made at the army's bakery in Zarqa. But pan-bread is not suited to meals as is Arabic bread. The difference is not simply a matter of taste and texture — Arabic bread serves also as a "utensil."

Taking note of this, in 1992 HRH Princess Sarvath presented the armed forces with a gift of a five-tonne daily capacity Middle Eastern bread product line.

Once installed, army engineers and supply officers began to realise an improvement. They conducted a study and found that not only was the Arabic bread now produced from this new furnace more satisfying and practical for the forces, but cost savings in operations, maintenance, and ingredients were substantial. Also, there was no waste — every scrap of dough is used.

With the 1993 installation of this first such bread-baking line at Ma'an, serving units in that area, the JAF moved the same year to install another three lines in Mafrag to serve units in both Mafrag and Irbid governorates. This second stage installation has a daily production capacity of 15 tonnes.

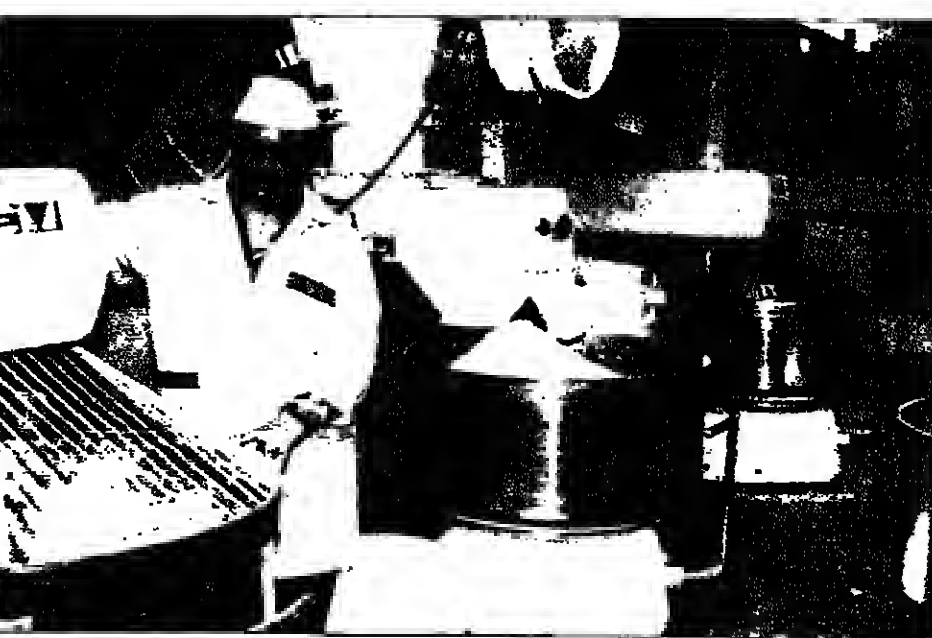
In 1997, HRH Crown Prince Hassan issued a directive whereby the Ministry of Supply later delivered three used, Canadian-made Arabic bread lines to the army.

These lines required major repair and reconditioning, which the army undertook, saving the JAF around JD500,000 which would have been spent to purchase four new lines to fulfill its requirements in this third stage of supply infrastructure improvements.

The three overhauled lines were installed at Jweideh, Irbid and Al Hashimiyyeh, and have a daily production capacity of 20 tonnes of Arabic bread.

Later that year, the army purchased another four product lines and installed them in Zarqa.

The Zarqa lines produce 20 tonnes of Arabic bread daily through the use of



A worker at the Zarqa bread line adds ingredients to the mix. The Zarqa facility has the capacity to produce 20 tonnes of bread per day (Jordan Armed Forces photo)

indirect heat. In this method, the bread is baked by hot air and not flames and makes for a healthier bread.

About 200 civilian and 60 military men and women are employed at the JAF bakeries. Maintenance on the equipment, which includes silos, flour sifters, kneaders, rollers and the furnaces, is carried out by military engineers.

The bakeries operate

seven days a week, 365 days a year and the improved infrastructure has made delivery to every part of the Kingdom possible within a few hours at maximum.

The pan-bread lines are operated monthly to keep them in working order.

With the daily capacity of all the Arabic bread lines and the older pan-bread lines, the JAF bakeries can also aid in food supply in

case of national emergencies.

Today, the annual average cut in costs of the JAF bakeries are: in use of equipment, JD255,000; and in raw materials, JD794,000 yearly (including a savings of 3,088 tonnes of flour). The total annual savings, spurred by an all-around practical idea, amounts to more than JD1 million a year in the armed forces' food supply sector.

what's going on

CONCERT

* Flamenco guitar concert by Manuel Granados, at the Royal Cultural Centre on Sunday, Feb. 22 at 8:00 p.m.

CULTURAL WEEK

* The Chinese Cultural Week at the Orthodox Club, Amman, until Feb. 23.

LECTURE

* "The Land and River of Spirituality" by Mr. Rami Khoury at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m. (following the annual general meeting).

PLAY

* Children's play "A Theatre Dream" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 11:00 a.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings by Sudanese artist Salah Al Murr at Baladna Art Gallery, Gunders Street, until Feb. 23.

* Private collection of Manshuh Bisharat entitled "A Vision, An Identity" at Dar Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until March 5. (Tel. 643251). Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists — "The New Collection."

* "History of Cartoon Drawings" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Feb. 26.

DEPARTURES

Time	Flight	Destination
05:40	Royal Jordanian	Amman
06:20	Amman	Amman
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Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturdays)

Shevardnadze warns against civil war as hostage crisis drags on

TIKHASHKARI, Georgia (AFP) — Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze warned against the threat of civil war Friday as an armed nationalist group dragged a hostage crisis in this isolated mountain village into a second day.

The gunmen, who have threatened to kill their hostages, refused to release them despite a tense night of face-to-face negotiations with Security Minister Jamal Gakhokidze, officials said.

The captives are four U.N. military observers who were monitoring a May 1994 ceasefire between Georgian troops and Abkhazian separatists. They and their driver were seized Thursday 20 kilometres away in the western Georgian town of Zugdidi.

In his first comment since the crisis erupted, Mr. Shevardnadze went on state television to warn the gunmen he would not tolerate "civil war."

"Everyone should know — there is no place in Georgia for civil war. Any action against Georgia serves only to bring the Georgian people together."

"There is no place for chaos," he said. "Let them see me and listen," he added, addressing himself directly to the hostage-takers.

"I know that among them are people who took part in the attack against me," the Georgian leader said, referring to an assassination attempt on Feb. 9.

Mr. Gakhokidze said "everything will be done to free the hostages." Interfax news agency reported.

Presidential aide Levan Aleksidze told ITAR-TASS that "an operation to free the Zugdidi hostages should take place within 24 hours."

However, it was not immediately clear if that meant the security forces would storm the house. A source close to the negotiations said "military action by the authorities could prove fatal to the hostages as well," adding that there were "many difficulties" in the talks, whose general tone was "poor."

"The terrorists are firm in their demands, because they have absolutely nothing to lose. Mr. Shevardnadze blames them for the attack on his life and he will never

forgive them," the source added.

Around 20 heavily armed men are thought to be holding the U.N. observers — a Swede, a Czech, and two Uruguayans plus their driver — the local mayor and his family in the mayor's home.

In Prague, the news agency CTK said the Czech captive had telephoned the Czech embassy in Moscow to report that all four U.N. observers were fine.

Lieutenant-Colonel Jaroslav Kulisek reported their condition in two calls to the embassy, one Thursday evening and another Friday morning, the agency said, quoting an embassy spokesman. It gave no further details.

Heavily armed police, interior ministry special forces, and Russian soldiers from the Abkhazian peace-keeping force were manning a security cordon 200 metres from the mayor's house. Villagers living within a kilometre of the house were moved out.

Security has also been beefed up across the country, notably in the Zugdidi region, where checkpoints were manned by around 20

troops, security ministry officials said.

The "Zviadist" group are demanding the authorities release all jailed supporters of late President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, including those arrested following the recent ouster of Mr. Shevardnadze's life.

Gamsakhurdia, ousted in a coup in January 1992, died in 1993. He was replaced as Georgian leader by Mr. Shevardnadze, whose legitimacy the "Zviadists" have never recognised.

In addition, the gunmen are demanding a meeting between the Georgian leader and the head of the "Zviadist" movement, the immediate withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from Abkhazia, and the closure of Russian bases in Georgia.

In July last year there were some 1,600 Russian peacekeepers manning the ceasefire line, with an estimated 18,000 Russian soldiers stationed in the Caucasus republic.

During the 1992-93 Georgian civil war, western Georgia was a base for pro-Gamsakhurdia forces opposed to Mr. Shevardnadze.



Afghans carry boxes with Russian humanitarian aid for victims of the devastating earthquake in the Afghan town of Rostaq (Reuters photo)

Fog prevents fresh airdrop of supplies for Afghan quake victims

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Foggy ground conditions in the earthquake-hit region of northern Afghanistan disrupted an airdrop of vital relief items Friday, Red Cross officials in Pakistan said.

A C-130 transport plane loaded with blankets, clothing and shelter material flew to the area from Pesbawar but had to return without making any drop, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said.

The operation, which started Thursday when the plane dropped 13 tonnes of non-food items, will be resumed Saturday, the spokesman said.

Thousands of people affected by the Feb. 4 earthquake that left an estimated 4,500 people dead, still remain in a "precarious" condition in remote villages, the officials said.

The ICRC has chartered the Hercules for air dropping its own supplies as well as relief material from various United Nations

agencies including the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme.

The airdrop is planned to continue for two weeks, according to priority needs decided by the ICRC, the U.N. Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance for Afghanistan and other agencies.

Following Thursday's airdrop in Rostaq area, the relief goods were taken by helicopter to the worst-affected villages.

Chinese dissident detained as chorus against Li Peng appointment grows

BEIJING (AFP) — A chorus of dissident voices opposing the expected appointment of Premier Li Peng to head China's parliament grew stronger Friday, as an activist was detained for seven hours by police for publicly calling Mr. Li a "murderer."

Shen Liangjing became the latest dissident to declare Mr. Li unfit for the office because of the premier's alleged role in directing the brutal June 4, 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

"Li Peng could have great responsibility for the June 4 period events," the former public prosecutor said in an open letter faxed to AFP, adding that a special court should be set up to investigate the massacre.

"Before the truth of the incident comes out, it's not suitable for him to work in the National People's Congress (NPC)," he said, referring to China's parliament.

Meanwhile, eastern Zhejiang province activist Mao Guoliang confirmed he was questioned by police Thursday afternoon for seven hours regarding an open letter in which he and seven other dissidents call Mr. Li a "murderer" earlier this week.

"They asked me about how the letter was distributed and how I contacted the other signees," the former Communist

Party member told AFP, adding that he was released far from his home at 11:00 p.m. (1500 GMT).

The open letter, addressed to the NPC Tuesday, urged delegates to oppose Mr. Li's candidacy as the parliament's chairman because he "had committed unforgivable crimes in the student movement of 1989."

Mr. Li will stand down as premier at the upcoming annual NPC session beginning on March 5, after which he is widely expected to become the parliamentary chief, replacing the retiring Qiao Shi.

"He has the blood of dead people on his hands," the seven activists had said in the open letter.

"He is no longer suitable for the position of national leader and we call on the National People's Congress not to vote for him as he already has a place in the history of China's humiliation," they said.

All the authors served long prison sentences following the June 4 massacre, which kicked off a nationwide crackdown on dissent.

Just prior to their protest, two other dissidents, Shanghai's Yang Qinheng and the Fuzhou-based Lin Xinsu, issued public statements protesting Mr. Li's bid to become the country's top legislator.

China has never revealed a full death toll from the crackdown, but eyewitness accounts tell of hundreds of unarmed demonstrators killed when troops moved in to break up the protests.

Mr. Shen's letter called for a full government reevaluation of the incident to free the current government of the "heavy burden" of guilt associated with it.

The Tiananmen Square demonstrations, which protested corruption and nepotism, are still officially designated as a "revolt" or "tumult."

The Anhui province activist also urged legislators to support a range of reforms to boost political openness and debate.

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a representative body aimed at providing parliament with grass-roots political feedback, should be opened to people of all political persuasions.

Mr. Shen, now unemployed, spent 17 months in jail for his activism in the past.

The Hong Kong-based Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China reported Friday that northern dissident Tian Xiaoming had issued a similar open letter to the CPPCC calling for political reforms and an end to corruption earlier this week.

Medical staff warned to wash hands before putting on rubber gloves

LONDON (AFP) — Latex gloves used for medical examinations, may give patients germs unless doctors and nurses wash their hands before putting them on, U.S. doctors warn in the latest issue of The Lancet medical journal.

In a Research Letter published in the Lancet which comes out Saturday, Dr. P. Harnigan and Dr. Jack W. Shields of Santa Barbara in California say they found that "these gloves are frequently contaminated with bacteria."

"They report findings from previous studies that only 27 per cent of health-care workers wash their hands before putting on gloves, 16 per cent change gloves between examining patients and 82 per cent can transmit microbes (bacteria and viruses) via gloved hands," The Lancet report said.

"They observed six health-care workers from the Holy Cross Hospital, Taos, New Mexico, U.S., as they took examination gloves out of their boxes and put them on."

"The gloves were then tested to see whether they had become contaminated with bacteria. All six workers touched the thumbs, fingers, and palms of the gloves at least once whilst putting them on. Four health-care workers did not wash their hands before putting on the gloves and added skin bacteria to the external surfaces of the gloves."

"Gloves were also tested straight from their boxes and some were found to be contaminated with bacteria before they even came into contact with health-workers' hands."

"Dr. Harnigan and Dr. Shields advise that 'health-care workers should wash their hands before gloving, and gloves supplied should be sterile,'" The Lancet said.

Burundi strongman asked to consultations at sanctions summit

KAMPALA (AFP) — Regional heads of state due to meet in Uganda Saturday to reconsider sanctions against Burundi sent a last-minute invitation to strongman Pierre Buyoya "to be available in Kampala for consultations."

The summit, the sixth on Burundi, is expected to group heads of state or their representatives from Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, along with Nyere and Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim.

Mr. Buyoya first seized power in 1987, stepping aside in 1993 when he lost an election to a Hutu opponent, Melchior Ndadaye, whose assassination in a coup attempt in October of that year sparked the civil war.

Mr. Buyoya made his position clear in an interview with the French daily Le Figaro, published Tuesday, in which he said the blockade was "strangling" Burundi.

He appealed to Tanzania, which spearheaded the embargo, and to the Commonwealth to do all in their power to lift the blockade.

Regional leaders eased the sanctions in April last year to allow Burundi access to humanitarian aid, seeds and school building materials. Kenya Airways Tuesday initiated a weekly relief and diplomatic carrier flight from Nairobi to Bujumbura.

In December, the U.N. special reporter on human rights in Burundi, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, called for an urgent review of the

sanctions, saying they were contributing to malnutrition, disease, and a shortage of food and medicines.

On Jan. 10, T.A.G. Makombe, the head of the OAU's group for conflict prevention, called for the sanctions to be scrapped, saying there had been significant progress towards peace.

That declaration came despite a rebel attack less than two weeks earlier on Bujumbura airport and nearby villages, with the army giving the toll as 286 civilians, six soldiers and 100 rebels killed.

On Feb. 3, Rwandan presidential aide Emmanuel Gasana said Kigali was prepared to reconsider the sanctions and that "a final decision should be taken in Kampala."

The U.N. World Food Programme meanwhile announced in late January that it was cutting relief supplies to 750,000 people in Burundi and Rwanda because fighting and heavy rains had blocked roads.

"The food aid situation is reaching alarming proportions," warned spokeswoman Christiane Berthiaume.

Last Tuesday, a meeting of Rwandan and Burundian Roman Catholic bishops called for the blockade to be lifted.

"This embargo was aimed at halting the war and encouraging peace moves, but we see that what is most apparent is misery — the hunger hitting people who have no means of ending the war," they said in a statement given worldwide distribution Thursday by the Vatican.

Anthrax tests set for materials seized as two suspects held

LAS VEGAS (AFP) — FBI tests were expected to reveal Friday if two men arrested here were in possession of anthrax, a deadly biological agent, that they allegedly threatened to use as a lethal weapon.

The two men — a member of a white supremacy group and a former Mormon missionary — were arrested here Thursday.

Admitted Aryan Nation member Larry Wayne Harris, 46, boasted that he had a vial of anthrax, according to a source cited in a criminal complaint.

"Harris held the vial in his hand and further stated that there was enough there to 'wipe out the city,'" according to an unnamed FBI source cited in the complaint.

Some reports said New York was a likely target of the attack but officials declined to confirm this.

The FBI was expected to know by Friday if the seized material was, in fact, anthrax.

Harris and inventor William Job Leavitt, 47 — who, according to friends of his, was a Mormon missionary — were arrested at a medical clinic in Henderson, Nevada, a suburb of Las Vegas. Forty petrie dishes were also taken from the clinic. A Mercedes-Benz where the

anthrax was believed to be stored was seized and taken to a military base for testing by a team trained in handling biological and chemical agents.

"It was suspected that these individuals were in possession of a dangerous biological chemical — anthrax," said FBI agent Bobby Siller, adding, "we feel confident we got all... the suspected contaminants."

Mr. Siller said that agents did not know what the intended target was.

Officials said more arrests could follow.

The two suspects were taken to Clark County jail and will have a detention hearing Monday.

Mr. Leavitt's attorney Kirby Wells said Mr. Leavitt, who owns Leavitt Technology as well as a laboratory in Frankfurt, Germany, was working on a technology to combat anthrax and had hoped to invent something "that would perhaps save millions of lives."

"He may have been in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was certainly unlucky but he hasn't done anything criminal... He's an innocent victim here," Mr. Wells told reporters outside the Federal Court building here.

Fellow defence attorney Lamond Mills added: "I think (the tests) will come back as an anthrax vaccine, and everybody will be incredibly relieved."

Mr. Harris had been on probation after a 1995 felony conviction after pleading guilty to illegally obtaining bubonic plague bacteria through the mail. Three vials of the toxins were found in his car.

Mr. Harris said he had planned to place a "globe" of bubonic plague toxins in a New York subway station where it would be broken by a passing subway train and cause hundreds of thousands of deaths, according to the complaint.

Mr. Harris expected Iraq to be blamed for the subway attack, according to the complaint.

According to the criminal complaint, the FBI informant said that Mr. Harris and Mr. Leavitt had asked him to test E. coli and bacillus subtilis, and then Tuesday they said they also had military grade anthrax.

The source told them that only a Biolevel III (for highly lethal viruses) laboratory should test the toxin. Mr. Harris and Mr. Leavitt said they didn't want to test the organisms, but rather wanted to buy the source's equipment.

Sierra Leone's dislodged rebels show defiance with terror

FREETOWN (AFP) — Sierra Leone's disempowered rebels have been killing and terrorising civilians in the northwest of the country, while the number of those detained following last week's junta ouster reached 1,000, reports said Friday.

Eleven people were killed and dozens wounded Thursday in Rokupé, 80 kilometres northeast of the capital and close to the Guinean border, when rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) armed with rifles, grenade launchers and machetes

attacked the town, local journalists told AFP by telephone.

"Several others were drowned as they tried to escape by dugout canoes or tried to swim from the area," one journalist said.

The unrest prompted forces of the Nigerian-led intervention force, ECOMOG, which flushed out an RUF-junta alliance from Freetown last week, to deploy in the area, where some 500 RUF fighters were reported to be massing for an attack.

"Houses have been looted and burnt by the rebels. The hardcore

junta and rebel leaders are apparently trying to set up a base in the area," a radio journalist said.

A Guinean ECOMOG contingent found a large cache of arms and ammunition hidden under a bridge in the area, according to one report.

On the other side of the country, ECOMOG troops continued to arrive from Liberia across the Mano River bridge, from where they headed for Kenema, 240 kilometres east of the capital.

The heavily-armed ECOMOG contingent was firmly

in control of Kenema undertaking mopping up operations after remnants of the junta and rebels made hasty flights from the town late Wednesday," a local administrator said.

But the country's second city of Bo, 170 kilometres east of Freetown, was still tense with junta forces in the west of the township while the militia groups loyal to legitimate President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah were in the east and north, according to reports reaching the capital.

Arrest warrant issued for former minister over debts

ROSTOCK, Germany (AFP) — German magistrates have ordered the arrest of former Transport Minister Guenther Krause, one of the architects of German reunification, because he is thousands of marks behind with his rent, his CDU party here said Thursday.

According to Friday's edition of the Berliner Morgenpost, Mr. Krause, 44, owes 70,000 marks (\$38,000) in rent arrears on his Berlin home.

A local spokesman for the ruling Christian Democratic Union said the arrest warrant was a technical measure and that Mr. Krause had promised to pay up in the next two weeks.

Mr. Krause was recently selected by Rostock CDU branch as its candidate for the legislative elections in September.

In 1993, Mr. Krause had to step down from his ministerial post in the wake of revelations that he used ministry funds to pay a furniture removal firm.

Mr. Krause was a close aide to the last prime minister of East Germany, Lothar de Maiziere, and led the East German delegation at the reunification talks.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl subsequently took him under his wing and predicted a brilliant political future for Mr. Krause.

Hand grenade thrown at S. African home of Muslim leader

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — A hand grenade was lobbed at the home of a leader of Cape Town's large Muslim community, damaging the house but injuring no one. South African police reported Friday.

The attack late Thursday targeted the home of Muslim Judicial Council president, Sheikh Nazeem Mohammad, the SAPA news agency reported.

Sections of the city's Muslim community have become embroiled in the People's Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) war against gang violence that is plaguing the down-market Cape Flats area of Cape Town.

A man was shot dead in the flashpoint Manenberg area of the Cape Flats in a drive-by shooting near a bar early Friday. A 15-year-old boy was shot in the legs in a nearby suburb Thursday. Police believe both incidents were gang-related.

Gangsters and taxi drivers were also involved in a shootout Thursday night, apparently because the drivers refused to pay protection money to gangs, said police.

No one was injured. Gangs have long ruled the poorer areas of Cape Town. Last week three teenage gangsters were killed apparently by members of a rival gang.

The killings sparked a wave of revenge attacks that forced soldiers and the police to step up their presence in the Cape Flats.

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Philippine Communists threaten to call off peace talks

MANILA (AFP) — Philippine Communist insurgents Friday threatened to call off peace talks with the government because it refuses to discuss the issue of compensation for victims of human rights abuses during the Marcos era.

The rebel National Democratic Front (NDF) said in a statement that it was "presenting to its collective organs of leadership ... the question whether the (Communist panel) should continue to conduct peace negotiations."

"In view of the distinct possibility that neither side will file notice of termination of peace negotiations", the Communists said they were entitled to "take precautions against any surprise attack."

The NDF also said their chief negotiator, Netherlands-based Luis Jalandoni, would be postponing indefinitely a planned trip to the Philippines.

The NDF had said the negotiations should include a demand that victims of human rights abuses during the regime of deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos be given a share of wealth recovered from the Marcos family.

However, the government has insisted that the issue is not part of the talks and is beyond the mandate of government peace negotiators.

Lawyers for about 10,000 human rights victims who earlier won a U.S. court decision for about \$2 billion in damages from the Marcos estate, also said the NDF has no right to represent them.

"Marcos was toppled in a popular revolt in 1986 and died in exile in Hawaii in 1989. The Marcos family, the government and victims of the Marcos regime have been quarrelling over who should get the substantial Marcos fortune which Manila insists was illegally obtained."

Communist guerrillas late last year increased their attacks on isolated government outposts and military patrols in an apparent attempt to strengthen their hand in the peace talks which are aimed at ending a 28-year insurgency.

The military says the Communist guerrilla strength has dwindled to about 6,000 fighters from a peak of 26,000 in the mid-1980s following a bitter internal split after the collapse of Communism worldwide.



Indonesia's newly installed armed forces chief General Wiranto (left) shakes hands with his predecessor General Feisal Tanjung (right) after formally handing over his post in a ceremony at ABRI headquarters in south Jakarta (Reuters photo)

New military chief takes over at crucial time for Indonesia

CILANGKAP, Indonesia (AFP) — Indonesia's new military chief praised the modern army Friday as he took over the helm of a pillar of the establishment at a time when the country faces a slide into chaos.

The country's 475,000 troops, known by their Indonesian acronym ABRI, had become "efficient and modern" under the leadership of his predecessor General Feisal Tanjung, said new Commander in Chief General Wiranto.

"I congratulate Feisal Tanjung who has done well and built an army efficient and modern," Gen. Wiranto said at the national military headquarters in Cilangkap, just south of Jakarta.

"ABRI has been successful in maintaining stability in the country," he added at a ceremony formally marking his promotion to commander in chief.

"ABRI must stay strong enough to face the economic difficulties that the country is facing now," he said in his address before military chiefs and foreign ambassadors and defence attaches, including Australian military commander General John Baker.

Gen. Tanjung, 58, said the powerful military, which enjoys a prominent political role and supports President Suharto's administration, would not change under its new commander.

"ABRI does not change and always stays the same," he said at the ceremony, which was also attended by about 1,000 troops from different branches of the military.

The occasion was marked by all the military pomp and ceremony of an army proud of its role in the country's struggle for independence in 1945 and which under the constitution plays an official role in political life.

Gen. Tanjung's last public act was to announce with Gen. Wiranto, 50, at his side that the army was throwing its weight behind Research and Technology Minister Bachrudin Habibie as vice president in next month's election.

The vice president is widely expected to succeed President Suharto, 76, who has said he will stand for a seventh five-year term in office.

By coming out publicly in favour of Mr. Habibie for a post which is generally reserved for a military man, the army quashed all speculation that it opposed his candidacy.

Although the post is normally merely a protocol, if the president dies or is incapacitated, the vice president would take over.

Gen. Wiranto takes over as the country is confronting its worst economic crisis, which has led to riots against rising prices and food shortages in more than 25 places across the archipelago.

And the ceremony came as soldiers in riot-torn Southeast Sulawesi province were put on the highest level of alert, troops in Kendari said Friday.

"They had all been advised of the move to 'Alert One' status," said the soldiers, in combat gear and carrying assault rifles as they patrolled the streets of the provincial capital.

Java, where more than half the country's 200 million people live, has so far seen the worst violence. Much of the rioting has targeted the ethnic Chinese community which only makes up five per cent of the population but holds great influence on commerce.

Witnesses have said often security forces do not intervene to help the Chinese communities or protect their property — something that has also been seen in the past during election campaigning and when to months of unrest shook several towns leaving many dead and a trail of damage.

Speaking after the ceremony, Lieutenant General Prabowo Subianto told reporters the military was not discriminating between indigenous Indonesians and the ethnic Chinese minority.

"We do our best to ensure the safety of all citizens, whatever their ethnic group or religion," added Gen. Prabowo, a son-in-law of Mr. Suharto and the fastest rising officer in ABRI.

"The doctrine of ABRI is that it is a people's army and ABRI will not fail the people and will protect all citizens."

But the apparent inaction or inefficiency, accompanied by at times threatening declarations that the army will maintain order, has raised some speculation about the true strength of the army.

Some military experts have even commented that most soldiers are Muslims and could react unpredictably if there were serious and prolonged clashes.

N. Korea blasts 6-nation declaration proposal as silly and dangerous

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea Friday called a proposal by a senior South Korean politician for a six-nation joint declaration of peaceful inter-Korean coexistence "silly and dangerous."

The call was made by Kim Jong-Pil, a political ally of the South's President-elect Kim Dae-Jung during a visit to Beijing earlier this month. He suggested that the six — the two Koreas, Russia, China, Japan and the United States — could contribute to stability in North East Asia by issuing a joint declaration.

"The call may sound good. But it is a silly and dangerous plan," the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said in a dispatch monitored here. "It is as foolish as trying to build a house on sand without foundation."

KCNA warned, adding the present situation in North East Asia, unlike that in Europe at the time of 1975 Helsinki declaration, was filled with antagonism.

"Stability and peace have not been ensured on the Korean Peninsula not because there is no 'declaration' by its neighbouring nations but because the United States has still kept huge armed forces in South Korea," it said.

Kim Jong-Pil's call, it concluded, was "either a revelation of their illiteracy or a manifestation of their sinister political intrigue intentionally ignoring the essence of the issue."

"The South Korean politicians must know that if they want to do something, they should do in their own way, and this is what the nation requires," KCNA said.

Kim Jong-Pil's call in Beijing took many diplomats here by surprise, as it came ahead of the second session of four-party peace talks scheduled for Geneva next month. The talks, involving the two Koreas, the United States and China, are designed to work out a permanent peace regime to replace the shaky truce that ended the 1950-53 Korean War, leaving the two technically at war. Russia, though it officially supports the four-party talks, had argued long and strongly that as a border state it too should be involved.

Roman road found near tower of Pisa

PISA, Italy (AFP) — A Roman road has been discovered near the celebrated leaning tower of Pisa, during work to consolidate the 12th century edifice to stop it falling down.

Ancient documents had referred to the existence of a Roman road in the area but it had not been found until now.

A mediaeval tomb containing a complete skeleton, but nothing else, was also found by the workers digging in the vicinity of the tower, which was closed to visitors eight years ago because of the risk of collapse.

Before July, two metal support cables will be fixed to the tower to keep it from tilting further.

Mexico moves to expel more foreigners involved in Chiapas politics

TUXILA GUTIERREZ, Mexico (AFP) — At least 12 more foreigners face imminent expulsion from Mexico for carrying out political activities in the southern state of Chiapas, a government official said.

Three foreigners have been thrown out of Mexico in the past week for "unauthorised political activities" — the latest one, American Thomas Hansen Thursday, said Luis Morones, the National Migration Institute's top official here in Chiapas.

The government's decision comes after the arrival of hundreds of European and U.S. observers in Chiapas for the second anniversary of a ceasefire between the government and Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) rebels.

The Zapatistas attacked on Jan. 1, 1994, but were quickly penned into a jungle area on the border with Guatemala and have since languished, although bitter statements by the group's leader, Subcomandante Marcos, have captured the imagination of Mexico's poor and leftists.

French former first lady Danielle Mitterrand was banned Monday from politics in Chiapas, along with other non-Mexicans.

The National Migration Institute said that 4,411 non-Mexicans travelled to Chiapas in 1997 and 206 were expelled for participating in marches, doing political work with the region's Maya Indians or blocking access to conflict zones.

Mexico's decision to crack down on "foreign interference in its internal affairs" is part of a new government strategy to deal with the simmering Chiapas conflict.

Emilio Rabasa, the government coordinator in peace talks with the Zapatistas, which have stalled since September 1996, said the new policy was implemented by Interior Minister Francisco Labastida since he took office in January.

Besides keeping foreigners at bay, the government refuses to give in to Zapatista demands that army troops leave Chiapas until the rebels return to the negotiating table, Mr. Rabasa said Thursday.

On a legal level, Mr. Rabasa added, the government is trying to find the material and intellectual culprits behind the December massacre of 45 Tzotzil Indians in Acteal, a village in Chiapas.

The EZLN broke off peace talks over what it said was government inaction on the February 1996 San Andres agreements on cultural and indigenous rights in Chiapas.

Mr. Rabasa said the government was not refusing to keep up its end of the San Andres bargain, but that it disputes a "bad translation" of points in the agreement on "territorial integrity, political structure and national unity."

Ethnic cleansing planned of Hutus on Congo border — human rights group

NAIROBI (AFP) — An exiled Rwandan human rights group charged Friday that Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda and Burundi are planning to eliminate Hutu civilians living near their common borders.

The Brussels-based Centre for the Struggle Against Impunity and Injustice in Rwanda said in a communiqué that "massive cleansing of all the civilian populations in any way related to the Hutus" and that "the execution of this plan is imminent."

The communiqué, received by AFP from Nairobi, was signed by the centre's coordinator, Joseph Matata, a Rwandan Hutu exiled in Brussels since May 1995.

He said the military chiefs of the four countries planned to empty Kivu provinces of all their Bushi, Bembe, Hunde, Hutu, Nande, Nyange, etc. people to replace them with a Tutsi population considered less hostile.

North and South Kivu provinces lie in the east of the DRC, with borders on Rwanda and Burundi.

The region has long been an ethnic powderkeg, and today is still coping with the fallout from the civil wars in Rwanda and the former Zaire, as well as longstanding land disputes, struggles between traditional chiefs and sporadic unrest sparked by tribal militias known as the Mai-Mai.

Mr. Matata headed the Rwandan Association for the Defence of Human Rights from 1991 until he fled Rwanda in May 1995, nearly a year after the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Forces ousted the former Hutu government following three months of genocidal civil war.

He was a defence witness on Feb. 10 for Jean-Paul Akayesu, a former mayor facing charges of genocide and crimes against humanity in the U.N. war crimes tribunal for Rwanda.

The tribunal is trying those suspected of perpetrating the 1994 bloodbath, in which between 500,000 and 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred.

Mr. Matata's organisation has repeatedly alleged that "acts of genocide" against Hutus have been committed in western and northern Rwanda.

Both Rwanda and Burundi have minority Tutsi-dominated governments, and actively backed the successful rebellion of Laurent Kabila, now president of the DRC, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni is a close ally of all three countries' leaders, having launched his own successful rebel movement with Tutsi backing.

Vigil at Taiwan morgue 'comforts wandering spirits'

PANCHIAO CITY, Taiwan (AFP) — Grief-stricken families of more than 200 victims of Taiwan's worst air disaster kept up a sad vigil Friday, comforting the wandering spirits of their loved ones with food, drink and prayers.

About 60 relatives were still awaiting word from forensic experts on whether bags full of remains could be identified as belonging to their family members still technically listed as missing after the crash of CAL Flight 676 Monday night.

"DNA testing is the last thread of hope we have to find the last two members of our family that are still missing," said Kuo You-Chin, who lost 11 relatives and still needed to identify his sister-in-law and a nephew, as others were seen nearby silently waiting for news from forensic experts.

"It would be okay if we could find even a piece of flesh from those bags of remains," he said of the remains kept in eight large refrigerated containers.

Other mourners were tending altars for the dead as hundreds of candles flickered tiny flames, marking the seconds of the vigil that traditionally lasts seven weeks under both Chinese Buddhist and Taoist funeral rituals.

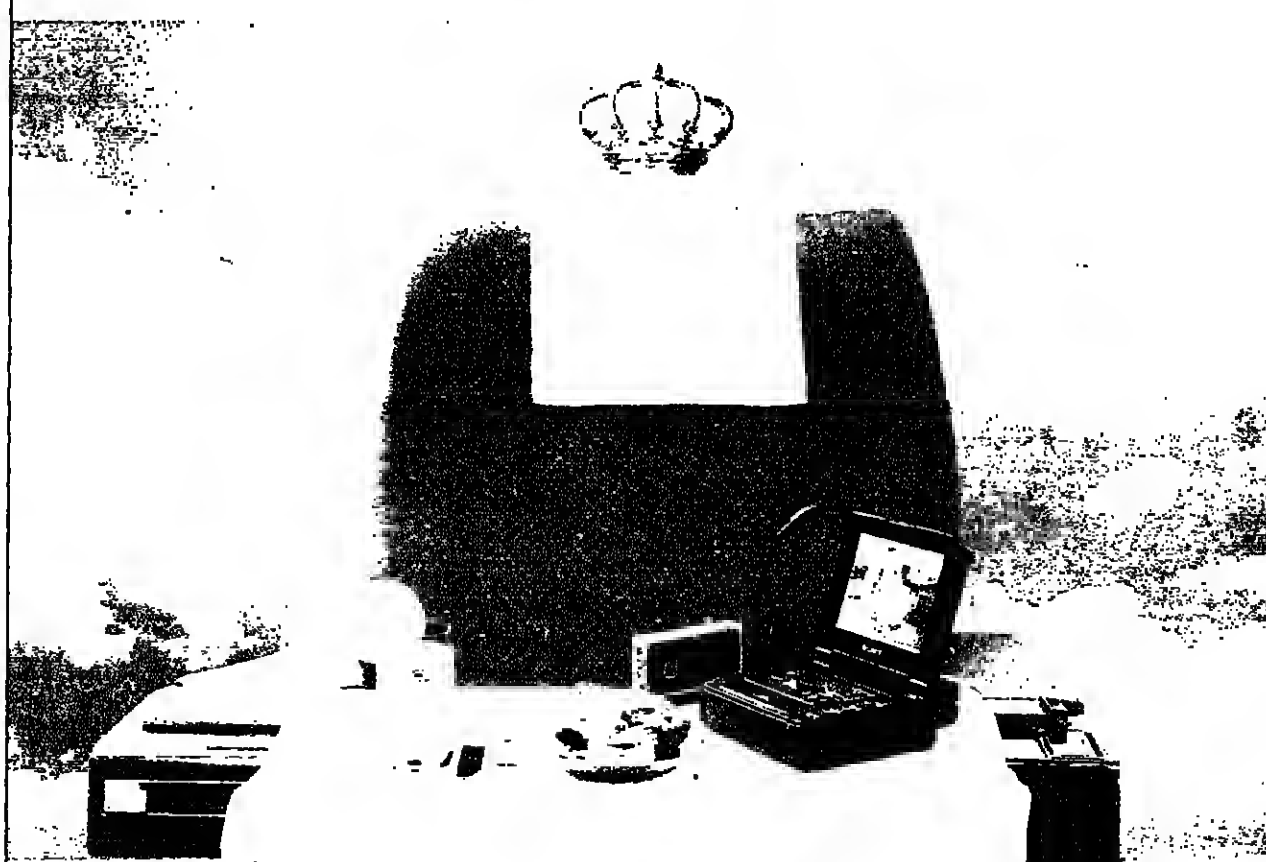
One angry woman was seen shouting at a morgue official who had thrown away some fruit, rice and vegetables, offered to the spirit of her daughter, and replaced it with a box of food provided by CAL staff.

The official quickly apologised and tried to explain his actions, saying: "I am very sorry. I meant no offence."

The woman then explained that the offerings were her daughter's favourite foods.

Many pictures of victims adorned the morgue, which has been frequently visited by families, CAL staff and Taiwan leaders since Monday, as soft chanting by Buddhist and Taoist monks and nuns filled the air.

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Global interest in peace

WHILE THE international community awaits eagerly the results of U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's peace mission in Baghdad that started yesterday, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Bill Richardson struck a discordant note. He declared that his government reserved the right to object to any deal that the secretary general might work out with the Iraqi authorities if Washington, not the U.N. Security Council, felt that any such accord contravenes the relevant council resolutions or American "national interests."

The new revelation about the true intentions of the U.S. shows beyond a shadow of doubt that the Clinton administration has a different agenda from that of the international organisation. Had the U.S. sought only the implementation of the Security Council resolutions, it would not have raised the issue of its own "national interests" as a distinct and additional factor that could determine the outcome of Annan's diplomatic effort. Richardson's statement is yet another evidence that his administration wants to leave the determination of what constitutes a contravention of the U.N. decisions to itself.

A few days earlier U.S. Secretary of Defence William Cohen declared that the U.S. was the only superpower left on the world stage insinuating that it was free to dictate its terms to the rest of the international community. This prejudicial U.S. stance complicates Annan's mediation efforts. The U.N. chief is not, and should not be, a messenger of the U.S. delivering ultimatums or otherwise. In order to succeed where all other previous attempts failed, he must have room for manoeuvring. Otherwise, his mission of peace becomes meaningless. The U.S. owes the U.N. a gesture which the secretary general can use to restore the international organisation's credibility and to serve as an arbiter of world conflicts.

Nobody wants to deny the U.S. its superpower status. But no country, save for perhaps Israel or Micronesia, approves of the clumsy way in which this superpower is behaving.

Instead of putting obstacles in the path of Annan's mission, the U.S. should enable him to carry out his basic mandate, that of working for and keeping world peace.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Munes Razaz commented on the findings of an Israeli inquiry that investigated the Mossad attack on Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al last year in Amman. The committee did not deplore the attack, and the Israeli prime minister stressed Israel's right to search for all anti-Israeli elements and liquidate them anywhere in the world, said the writer. This decision and the committee's findings clearly reveal the Israeli government's determination to repeat criminal attacks in Jordan as well as other parts of the world, he said. Therefore, he said, Jordanian security authorities should announce that they reserve the right to retaliate and search for and eliminate all elements considered harmful to Jordan and its citizens, like those who carried out the attack on Misha'al in Amman. Such elements, he added, constitute a serious danger to Jordan's stability and security and infringe on the country's sovereignty. Of course this is only a theory, and Jordan cannot take this decision in view of the fact that it has signed a peace treaty with Israel, but this theory should be presented to the Israeli prime minister who must realise that assassination is a two-edged sword which, said the writer, Jordanians reserve the right to use.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallah said, in the ongoing American preparations for war on Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia which together form an Arab bloc would find their national interests in jeopardy if an aggression on Iraq takes place. Saudi Arabia, which has repeatedly declared that it stands firm against any partition of Iraq, is opposed to the use of force against Baghdad, and Syria, which is surrounded by Turkey and Israel, both of which have their eyes on occupying parts of Iraq, will be in grave danger in the event of an aggression and subsequent partition of Iraq, according to the writer. As for Egypt which currently leads the Arab World and heads the Arab summit institution, will find its position threatened and will lose credibility should the aggression take place, Qallah said. He said these three countries, in addition to Jordan, have so far succeeded in showing a cohesion among Arab countries and influenced the U.S. to allow the U.N. secretary general to visit Baghdad to discuss a peaceful solution. He said these countries should continue to exert pressure on Saddam Hussein to help defuse tensions, but they also should pressure U.S. President Bill Clinton to give the Iraqi leadership a chance to find a way out of the present crisis.

Jordanian Perspective

U.N.-Baghdad accord could prove mutually beneficial

By Dr. Musa Keilani

THE MISSION of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to defuse the crisis between Iraq and the U.N. — between Iraq and the United States, to be more accurate — could be a turning point not only in the efforts to close the Iraq file once and for all but also in the history of the world body itself. The United Nations has never been successful in defusing any crisis in its history because of big-power meddling. In the case of the Iraqi crisis, the situation is no different. If anything, we have the sole superpower in the world preparing for a military offensive against Iraq. But what is indeed comforting to us is the support that three other members of the Security Council as well as the international community have given to the Annan mission. We hope that, given the international focus on the crisis today and the growing rejection of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's threats — backed of course by Britain — Washington would be dissuaded from pulling the trigger. If it does, it would be another factor in sapping the last reserves of U.S. credibility in this region.

Still, that does not absolve the Iraqi regime from fulfilling its obligations towards the United Nations Security Council resolutions. Our desire to see all hurdles, excuses and justifications removed from the way of an end to the crippling sanctions on Iraq is not due to any love for Saddam Hussein whose ruthless dictatorship is not condoned by Jordanians, and whose practice of repressive measures is not tolerated by young university students who refused even to mention his name, but only the name of Iraq, during the last five expressions of support that took place the last 10 days.

But it is legitimate to voice our apprehension over the fallout

in Jordan of any military strike against our eastern Arab neighbour, we also believe that it is indeed a matter of principle that all members of the international community, including Israel, should abide by United Nations decisions.

At the same time, we cannot also accept any meddling in the work of any body supervising the implementation of U.N. decisions and the twisting of facts and distortion of truths by anyone. Obviously, that has been largely the case so far with Iraq. We do not know for sure whether Baghdad has fully disclosed all details of its programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction which were graphically pinpointed by Hussein Kamel when he was debriefed upon his defection to Amman in August 1995, but we do know that what may be left beneath the surface is nowhere near the size and scope that some analysts would like to project if only to maintain Iraq as a caged lion.

As such, it is incumbent upon the Iraqi government to fully cooperate with Annan and pull the rug from under the feet of those pro-Israel supporters who have given no indication so far of any inkling to see an end to the sanctions against Iraq; on the contrary, they have always acted in a way that they would like to retain the stranglehold on Iraq for the next 100 years if that is what it takes to serve their "strategic" agenda to punish the only country which refuses to recognise Israel and which busted the dual containment policy trap.

No doubt, the Iraqi regime is fully aware of the intentions of those forces at work. Hopefully, Baghdad will rise to the challenge it faces today and make use of the opportunity that has presented itself not only to resolve the latest crisis but also to set a firm ground for what is expected of it before the sanctions could

be lifted completely.

What encourages us here is the transparency with which the Annan mission is taking place and the affirmation by the U.N. chief that Baghdad should not be asked to undertake anything that would violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and humiliate its nation.

Success in the Baghdad mission will indeed be a big asset for Annan as the dynamic head of the world's largest but till now dormant diplomatic body. Beyond that, however, is the prospect that Annan's triumph in defusing the crisis and securing complete Iraqi cooperation in implementing U.N. resolutions would give new strength and vigour to the U.N. as an institution with independent clout which brooks no room for the vested "strategic" agenda of those at work to escalate the crisis in hope it will rebound with all the beneficiary assets to Tel Aviv or Kuwait.

That gives us enough hope that Annan's success in Baghdad would also mean a new role for the U.N. chief in forcing certain other countries in the region, including Israel and Iran, which have earlier declared that Security Council resolutions pertaining to them are dead letters.

So much hope, political and humanitarian, is riding on Annan's ongoing mission that we breathlessly await its outcome.

Jordanians, at universities and mosques, were not applauding this week a ruthless dictator, with Kurdish and Shiite blood on his hands, but they were expressing solidarity for an Arab people who has stood with them all the time. The success of Annan's mission will signal a sigh of relief for all of us here in Jordan.

Playing the game of 'chicken'

By Omar Abbas

IT SHOULD be simple logic, that one should not play the game of "chicken" with the wolves, because the chicken are bound to chicken-out and end up on the wolves' menu!

The regime in Baghdad, regrettably, has not in the past, nor does it now see this simple logic. After the Kuwait misadventure, in which the Iraqi invader was booted out of Kuwait by overwhelming forces and paid a steep price in lives and economic infrastructure, Baghdad sat in "sawfan" and signed a ceasefire agreement, as a result of which, it voluntarily gave away a certain amount of its sovereignty, the sole purpose of which according to U.N. Security Council resolution 687, was to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, and in full compliance with clause (22), Iraq would be legally eligible to regain its partially lost sovereignty and sell its oil on the world market, hence ameliorating the lives of its beleaguered people and normalising its relations with the world community for that matter.

One would expect, considering what is at stake — the livelihood and health of millions of Iraqis, the destiny of a society and in fact the destiny of

a country — that if a ruling regime was at all concerned, it would adhere to the requirements of "simple logic" and to cooperate to the fullest extent possible in reaching the goal of clause (22) of resolution 687 and not to allow any pretexts to any other party to find fault in its compliance with resolutions of the U.N. Security Council, in effect prolonging the damaging sanctions.

Regrettably, the Iraqi regime has been consistently, and for whatever ulterior motive, doing the opposite for seven years, giving it's adversaries all the pretexts to attack it, while Iraq and Iraqi society, breakdown, year after year. The question is, does the ruling regime in Baghdad, really care about the suffering people? The regime has often manifested its obsession in holding on to power, no matter who goes hungry and who dies of sickness — even then, one would ask, should that blind them from seeing the "simple logic" which would entitle them to ask for the lifting of sanctions, to matter what the private agenda of the USA regarding this matter. Many dignitaries, including President Mubarak of Egypt have lately raised the "simple question," if the regime in Baghdad, has nothing to hide, why not cooperate fully and leave no pretexts

for any party to undermine their position and renew the sanctions, now going on for seven years. The regime in Baghdad, has not been able to (or does not want to) answer that simple question or act according to its logic; all we hear from the regime is the silly refrain of "sovereignty," which it gave away in 1991 according to the ceasefire agreement and which it can legally require to regain by behaving in a manner conducive to gaining the confidence of the world body and the world community, in other words complying with the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and not reacting in a hysterical way to communique of the U.S. government which lies outside the text of the Security Council resolutions.

Every now and then, dying children and destitute Iraqis are displayed on television by the regime as a ploy to gain sympathy and have the sanctions lifted, but for two years the regime in Baghdad stone walled Resolution 968, "which was intended to allow" a reasonable amount of food and medicine to reach the beleaguered Iraqi people, on the flimsy pretext of "sovereignty." In fact neither the dying children, the destitute millions or even sovereignty was on the mind of the ruling few in Baghdad; but that Iraq's

oil wealth was in the hands of the U.N. and out of their control is what shook them and made them feel threatened, after all, staying in power was their paramount concern, and Iraq's oil wealth was the prime instrument of making that possible.

In the latest act of brinkmanship, in which the Iraqi leadership attempts (again) to test the resolve of the world and to sow as much discord amongst the major players in the world body, again bringing the area to another menacing military showdown.

The prime self-appointed policeman, the USA, in fact the only country in the world with enough military clout to impose the will of the world body on clients like Saddam Hussein, regrettably, does not itself enjoy much credibility in the Arab Middle East and for good reason. The USA, has failed itself, to uphold U.N. Security Council resolutions (and international conventions), by openly covering for Israel's numerous defiance of those resolutions "and" conventions dealing with occupied territories, whilst millions of Palestinians are being constantly victimised by Netanyahu's open conspiracy to encroach on the little that is left of their homeland, the USA protects Israel by using its veto power. When 160 nations of the world

body voted in favour of the Palestinians right to self-determination, an internationally recognised human right the USA found it proper to stand alone to defy all these nations, by siding with Israel — no one was going to overlook the double-standards of the USA when dealing with Saddam Hussein's violation of U.N.S.C. resolutions. The USA has failed to endear itself to the Arab-mass, in the street.

For all the indignities imposed by the ruling regime on the Iraqi people, for close to three decades and the outcome of two foolish wars, which effectively destroyed the future of millions of Iraqis, I am sure the majority of those Iraqis wish to see this regime dealt with to end their prolonged misery. It is very doubtful that the projected aerial strike will achieve that end.

The looming military strike should somehow be stopped, the collateral damage resulting from that intended striking will probably cause further misery to millions of innocent people, inside and outside Iraq — I hope for the sake of all those people, sense will prevail.

The writer is a business entrepreneur. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Jordan's responsibility is continued support of the Iraqi people

By Hanan Toukan

TODAY The world is experiencing a sort of déjà-vu with regard to what the U.S. media likes to call the "Iraq-U.N." conflict. The endless rhetoric comprised of threats aimed at the Iraqi people by the U.S. to succumb to its policy in the Middle East, the vilification of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi's by the U.S. government and media, and the need for the Western powers led by the U.S. preaching atop the moral high ground to play the role of genuine peace lovers somewhat resembles a broken record.

In fact it is easy to see the irony in the U.S.-led stand taken to bear Iraq into compliance. The aircraft carriers now positioned for confrontation in the Gulf carry millions of tonnes worth of explosives. This escalation is itself in clear breach of the original U.N. resolution, with which Iraq is accused of failing to comply. The U.N. resolution, the medium used to implement Western policy the Gulf, demands the removal of all "weapons of mass destruction" from the Middle East. In the alleged pursuit of that goal the U.S. and its allies are adding hugely to the destructive capacity that already exists in the region.

Most importantly, Arab states point to Israel's nuclear arsenal — an estimated 200-300

devices — the largest in the region. Just recently the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) demanded from the U.S. some sort of protection to guard against the threat of Israeli chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Palestinian Health Minister Ryad Zananoun in a statement to journalists expressed fear that "even in leaks of peace the Palestinians can be victims of leaks from [Israeli] nuclear reactors or from biological and chemical stocks." What is ironic about this request is that it came after an attempt by the U.S. to "protect" Palestinian civilians in case of exposure to Iraqi biological or chemical weapons striking in nearby areas, by sending a team of U.S. experts to PNA controlled areas. It is not usual that one bears of Arab fears of the Israeli nuclear capacity in the area — the threat is real. Predictably, Israel is treated differently than it's Arab neighbours in such matters. Its pleas for protection are not only echoed throughout the world but they are also responded to unconditionally by pro-Israeli representatives in the U.S. Congress at the snap of a finger. Israel's potential for destruction is measured not by the contents of its nuclear arsenal, but by its support to the West, in addition to the fact that it plays the role of the "moderate" amidst a sea of extremist Islamic militants. Thus it is in this context that Israel's weapons of

mass destruction are seen as harmless elements in its "defensive capability".

It was under the same pretence that the U.S. supplied anthrax to President Saddam during the 1980's. Then President Saddam was the friend and the ally, and Iran was the militant Islamic enemy, threatening regional and world security and stability. Thus President Saddam was implicitly given the green light to experiment with biological warfare, on a "defensive" basis. The result the mass murder of Kurdish civilians and the destruction of their villages.

The double standard of the U.S. and its Western allies with regards to the promotion of democracy and human rights is a known fact throughout the world.

That being the case, and unlikely to change in the near future, I believe that on a local scale our responsibility in Jordan lies in our continued support of the Iraqi people. Since the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty it has become increasingly difficult to display any sort of emotion that would have traditionally branded us as the "extremists" the U.S. is so terrified of. During the last Gulf war, Jordan took an official stand against an allied attack on Iraq. Moreover Jordanians had no qualms about showing their true sentiments. The truth is that today, Jordanians feel the same way. We are officially

at peace with the state of Israel and on the U.S. "good side" once again. Yet it is difficult to hide the fact that even those Jordanians who had initially welcomed the peace treaty as a means of economic improvement have been disappointed. The continued aggressive and provocative actions of the Likud Party led by Benjamin Netanyahu make it extremely difficult for us to swallow what is happening in Iraq today.

I believe the only tool (albeit a weaker tool one can argue) we have at this stage is to speak our minds. If communal discussions and displays of frustration are not permitted at home, as part of a security strategy, then the truth will never be heard across borders where our fate seems to lie. The satisfaction of the local population is ultimately what matters for it is what decides the level of stability at the end of the day.

Some medium must be found between democracy and security in the country, to get our message across to the people of the U.S., Israel and their allies — the status quo is not acceptable.

The writer is working on a health care reform project. She contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Warnings of extremist actions evident in commentaries

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

ARABIC DAILIES last week dealt primarily with the threats of a military strike against Iraq and prospects of finding a solution to the crisis. Other topics covered were the Middle East question and domestic affairs.

Al Ra'i's Sultan Hattab accused the U.S. of exercising state terrorism by massing forces to attack Iraq. He said despatching U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to Iraq with an ultimatum to Baghdad to succumb to American desires is a tactic designed to draw an Iraqi rejection of such behaviour and so find an excuse to launch aggression. The U.S. is not backed by international legitimacy, nor is it supported by the Security Council in its new aggression on Iraq, but it seems that the Zionist lobby in the U.S. is determined to push President Bill Clinton towards war and help Israel achieve its ambitions of fragmenting the Arab World, charged the writer. In the U.S. itself, the secretaries of state and the defence have witnessed fierce opposition to the U.S. administration's orientation towards war on Iraq at a meeting with university students, noted the writer. He said the U.S. administration will be committing a grave blunder if it carries out an aggression on Baghdad because such aggression is bound to unleash acts of terrorism and extremism in this region.

Ibrahim Abi, another Al Ra'i columnist, criticised the U.S. for not giving diplomacy enough of a chance to solve the Iraqi crisis peacefully. He said the U.S. is, however, patient with Israel, which occupies Arab lands, possesses weapons of mass destruction of all kinds and continues to disregard U.N. resolutions. The writer said that even the U.S. sponsored peace accords with the Palestinians are being disregarded by the Israeli government, and Washington is not

threatening to attack Israel or even exercise any kind of pressure to force it to succumb to the world community's will.

According to Hosni Ayyesh of Al Ra'i, the U.S. is ready to make peace with the Iraqi leadership if it executes the following four conditions: if it recognises Israel and establishes full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state; if Baghdad revokes its decision of nationalising British oil companies that used to operate in Iraq; if Baghdad agrees to the formation of a federation in Iraq grouping the Kurds, the Sunnis and the Shiites; and if Baghdad allows the U.S. to establish a naval base in its southern regions. The writer said Washington's claim that Iraq still possesses weapons of mass destruction is a decoy to deceive world public opinion and secure support for a military strike against Iraq.

Al Dostour's Othman Rintawi said Kofi Annan's mission to Baghdad serves as the last chance for diplomacy to settle the Iraqi crisis, and it is up to the Iraqi leadership to reach a formula with the U.N. secretary general acceptable to the Security Council. Annan is submitting his own formula, backed by the council, mainly the U.S. which does not accept Iraq's suggestion that the inspectors should finish their work in two months but has some new elements like the inclusion of an additional number of U.N. officials to the original inspectors, which might be acceptable to Baghdad. He said Annan's mission has a good chance for success.

Taber Adwan, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm, said he hoped Syria, which dispatched its vice president and foreign minister to Cairo to discuss the Iraqi crisis, will play a key role in rallying the Arab coun-

tries towards full opposition to the use of force and form a bloc that guarantees the use of diplomacy to settle the crisis. The writer said, in 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait, Syria and Egypt were instrumental in rallying the Arab countries against Baghdad and backed the international community's efforts to evict the Iraqis from Kuwait by the use of force. Unless the Arabs stand united in this crisis and prove their stand they are bound to be marginalised by Washington in any future crises and would risk fragmentation of the Arab World.

Tareq Masarweh of Al Ra'i said of the report by a special Israeli committee that investigated the Mossad attack in Amman on Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al last year, it is clear from the report that no blame is placed on the Israeli government but rather on the Mossad for its ill-planned assassination attempt on Misha'al. The report and the Israeli government leader's statement in which he said Israel has the right to attack what he called terrorists anywhere in the world clearly show that Israel is determined to conduct other assassination attempts in Jordan and other parts of the world, the writer said. He said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's apology to Jordan at the time was a deception, and it is clear that he would not refrain from sending Mossad agents to Jordan in the future.

Mohammad Subeiti of Al Arab Al Yawm warned that Israel's acts of terrorism and U.S. aggression on Iraq would invite counter actions by extremists and fundamentalists. The Arabs and Muslims who live through a state of despair and frustration in view of the continued aggression on their lands and Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories are certain to be pushed towards extreme acts of retaliation, according to the writer. In his view the Palestinian territories are first to witness the emergence of extremist and violent groups, but Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states are soon to follow.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Jordan wins \$8m in 'oil-for-food' contracts with Iraq

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordanian companies have won a further \$8 million of trade contracts with Iraq under the U.N.-approved "oil-for-food" agreement, said the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Thursday.

The six new contracts, which include deals to supply Iraq with medicines, plastic bags and soaps have been approved by the U.N. Sanctions Committee.

The oil-for-food programme allows Baghdad — which has been under U.N. sanctions since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990 — to export up to \$2 billion of oil every six months in order to buy humanitarian supplies.

The new contracts bring Jordan's total income from the U.N. programme to about \$207 million since the programme was introduced in 1996.

This figure is still well below the billion-dollar-a-year trade conducted between Amman and Baghdad before the Gulf crisis of 1990-91 when Iraq was Jordan's top trade partner.

The Sanctions Committee also permits Jordan to conduct a separate trade protocol with Iraq which will allow for \$255 million of trade in 1998.

Oman signs \$1.1b fertiliser plant deal with Indian firms

MUSCAT (AP) — State-owned Oman Oil Co. has finalised a \$1.1 billion deal with two Indian companies to set up a fertiliser plant in the Gulf state, Oman's commerce and industry minister has said.

Maqbool Ben Ali Sultan, the official Oman News Agency that the agreement was signed in India with the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers and Krishak Bharti Cooperative. Financing for the project is under negotiation, with a meeting set for later this month in London with international banks and financial institutions, Mr. Maqbool said.

Oman and India signed the initial fertiliser agreement last year.

The plant is set to begin operations in 2001. It is designed to produce 1.4 million metric tonnes a year of urea, destined for export to India, and 300,000 metric tonnes a year of ammonium, targeted for sale to a company in Norway.

Iraq-U.S. crisis causes turnover, share prices at AFM to drop

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The standoff between Iraq and the U.S. over Baghdad's refusal to grant access to U.N. inspectors was behind the decline in activity at the Amman Financial Market (AFM), a broker said Friday.

The AFM weekly bulletin indicated that turnover declined to JD5.2 million down from JD6.1 million a week ago, a drop of 14.8 per cent.

Naim Nageeb, a broker at the AFM, told the Jordan Times that dealers were "very cautious to buy shares and remained reluctant to show more enthusiasm."

"When dealers feel that there would be a rapprochement in the crisis, they tend to buy. But when situation seems to be very hot they lose their appetite," Mr. Nageeb said.

If (Kofi) Annan succeeds in his mission in Baghdad, this will reflect positively on the AFM turnover but if he fails the consequences will be very bad to the market," Mr. Nageeb said, referring to the U.N. secretary general's visit to Baghdad Friday.

Mr. Nageeb said that the Iraqi crisis also reflected negatively on the general price index which recorded a 0.65 per cent decrease, or 0.39 per cent.

The AFM bulletin showed that the price index closed at 165.3 point last week down from 166.02 point in the previous week.

"Another reason that affected the price index was too much supply which was not met with the same quantity of demand," Mr. Nageeb said.

"Supply of shares, especially of the Jordan Cement Factories Company, by foreign portfolios was one of the major characteristics of the last week trading which led to the decrease in the price index," he explained.

Mr. Nageeb indicated that the banking sector accounted for the lion's share of the weekly turnover as it took 41.2 per cent, or JD2.13 million, of the total.

He said most of the demand in the banking sector focused on the Arab Bank shares, the Kingdom's largest financial institution.

The industrial sector came second with JD1.6 million, or 32.3 per cent, followed by the services sector with JD1.3 million, or 25 per cent, and finally insurance sector with JD38,000 or 0.08 per cent.

Out of 91 firms that changed hands in the last week trading, 32 recorded increase in its prices compared with 40 which registered losses. Share prices of nine firms did not change.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BASE CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN TELEPHONE: 407171 / 407179 ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD 14/02/1998 - 19/02/1998 WEEKLY REPORT																		
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES EXERCISED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS			
HIGH	LOW																	
112.000	374.500	ARAB BANK	15.3	1.71	46	4840	1511340	230.50	330.50	321.00	130.00	0.50	325.901	110	4			
1.800	1.710	JOR. NATIONAL BANK	0.00	0.00	1	18150	31451	1.75	1.75	1.73	1.74	-0.01	1.731	041	1			
3.420	1.100	TAJMAH ARAB BANK	4.8	4.54	1	2000	12502	1.30	2.29	2.29	2.29	0.00	1.790	038	1			
		TAJMAH ARAB BANK/NEW		0.00	1	3800	13400	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	0.00	3.000	074	1			
1.540	1.170	BANK OF JORDAN	4.4	0.00	6	6350	8488	1.39	2.29	1.39	1.29	-0.10	1.290	040	2			
1.020	1.420	MID. EAST. INV. CO.	44.1	0.00	7	17050	17170	1.01	1.04	1.01	1.01	-0.02	1.010	014	3			
1.710	1.490	INDUSTRIAL DEV. CO.	10.2	4.14	31	41350	107598	1.50	2.70	1.48	1.70	-0.02	1.498	259	5			
5.220	5.400	THE JORDANIAN BANK	39.1	1.98	16	19581	97462	5.00	5.00	4.90	4.90	-0.10	4.915	039	4			
2.000	1.430	JOR. INVEST. CO.	10.3	0.00	15	2355	4561	1.94	1.94	1.92	1.92	-0.03	1.937	014	3			
4.710	1.470	JOR. INV. CO.	4.2	7.84	86	104750	14444	1.47	1.47	1.47	1.47	-0.02	1.471	024	5			
2.000	2.200	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	10.9	4.49	154	90032	18745	2.30	2.20	2.14	2.14	-0.04	2.090	094	5			
1.040	1.030	UNION DEV. BANK/INV.	14.2	0.00	5	1200	3245	1.02	1.03	1.02	1.02	-0.01	1.010	014	3			
1.970	1.780	JOR. INV. CO. NEW/NEW	-	0.00	1	700	350	1.80	1.75	1.75	1.75	-0.05	1.750	004	1			
1.900	1.920	UNION DEV. BANK (OLD/NEW)	15	18.52	11	2450	1967	1.82	1.82	1.80	1.81	-0.01	1.803	123	3			
BANKS															CHANGE: 1.0 - 0.464			
2.100	2.700	JORDAN INSURANCE	11.6	5.54	1	500	1350	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	-0.00	2.700	010	1			
7.100	1.500	JORDAN ARAB INSUR.	22.9	4.35	7	828	3984	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	-0.00	2.300	041	1			
2.210	1.900	JOR. PRIME INVEST.	9.9	7.14	8	18405	24453	2.14	2.10	2.07	2.10	-0.04	2.098	013	3			
1.250	1.250	HOLY LAND INSUR.	0.00	0.00	3	6092	1415	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	-0.00	1.250	028	1			
2.610	2.410	NATL. ARAB. INSUR.	14.4	5.37	2	400	978	2.41	1.63	1.63	1.63	-0.08	1.630	020	1			
INSURANCE															CHANGE: 1.0 - 0.297			
2.050	1.910	JOR. ELECTRIC POW.	9.4	5.03	120	96284	191307	1.94	2.02	1.94	1.99	-0.02	1.987	442	5			
5.030	2.630	JORDAN ELECTRICITY	14.1	4.85	1	100	237	2.50	2.37	2.37	2.37	-0.13	2.369	003	1			
5.030	5.030	VEHICLE OWNERS FID.	9.4	4.06	1	300	1363	5.03	4.78	4.78	4.78	-0.25	4.543	025	1			
1.070	1.000	MUT. PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	21	12700	12638	1.01	1.01	0.91	1.00	-0.01	0.995	054	5			
4.990	4.990	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	25.4	0.00	1	300	44	4.99	4.99	4.94	4.94	-0.02	4.940	003	1			
8.500	8.500	ALBA	5.68	0.00	2	6000	51300	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	-0.20	8.550	200	2			
3.210	1.180	ALBA EAST HOTELS	17.8	0.00	67	287600	338329	1.21	1.20	1.17	1.17	-0.04	1.174	029	2			
3.950	3.920	ARAB INTL. INV. BANC.	10.3	0.00	12	1900	15340	3.92	3.94	3.90	3.94	-0.01	3.913	039	4			
1.940	1.920	KARKA EDUCATION	-	0.00	7	4450	4324	1.93	1.93	1.92	1.92	-0.01	1.927	009	4			
1.750	1.640	UNIFICO	8.1	6.41	14	5950	10045	1.41	1.70	1.44	1.40	-0.03	1.492	119	5			
4.440	4.440	UNION LAND DEV.	0.00	0.00	10	2100	3998	4.40	4.40	4.40	4.40	-0.04	4.454	042	2			
1.280	1.280	UNION LAND FOR FINAN. INV.	44.0	0.00	1	1000	1230	1.28	1.22	1.22	1.23	-0.05	1.230	095	1			
SERVICES															CHANGE: 1.0 - 0.747			
3.020	2.740	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	10.2	4.01	31	22504	60929	2.74	2.75	2.49	2.70	-0.04	2.707	031	4			
5.900	5.920	ARAB POTASH CO.	14.2	3.21	1	1200	21570	5.90	5.85	5.85	5.85	-0.05	5.850	005	1			
10.440	10.130	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.9	8.71	58	18511	108990	10.14	10.29	10.05	10.20	-0.04	10.206	199	5			
1.210	1.210	MOULIN INDUSTRIES	9.7	8.92	6	580	640	1.21	1.16	1.17	1.12	-0.09	1.138	058	2			
3.340	3.340	INDUSTRIAL COMM. CO.	0.00	0.00	6	595	794	1.28	1.26	1.24	1.24	-0.04	1.238	012	2			
4.450	4.410	JOR. INVEST. CO.	10.4	3.10	3	3300	8185	4.45	4.65	4.65	4.65	-0.20	4.450	032	1			
4.630	4.200	ARAB PHARM. MANUF.	13.0	4.24	170	124599	589744	4.58	4.98	4.57	4.73	-0.34	4.112	1388	5			
2.890	2.890	JORDAN DRINK	9.1	8.52	3	1214	2489	2.89	2.87	2.81	2.87	-0.02	2.849	049	1			
1.290	1.290	JOR. PAPER MANUF.	15.9	6.25	7	200	254	1.29	1.28	1.28	1.28	-0.01	1.280	006	2			
0.800	0.800	BATIA INDUSTRIES	0.00	0.00	6	2150	1697	0.80	0.80	0.78	0.78	-0.02	0.789	143	2			
5.040	5.100	MAR ALGAMA DEV. INV.	14.1	6.33	10	4150	24039	5.03	5.02	5.07	5.71	-0.06	5.193	049	2			
4.500	4.410	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.5	0.00	81	130150	51930	4.41	4.44	4.40	4.45	-0.04	4.445	044	5			
7.300	7.400	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	22.4	0.00	12	28800	27314	7.31	7.31	7.22	7.14	-0.03	7.111	023	3			
1.590	1.540	NATIONAL INVEST.	0.00	0.00	11	2700	1615	1.56	1.56	1.54	1.54	-0.02	1.545	049	3			
4.320	4.400	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	-	0.00	28	21550	8974	4.41	4.42	4.40	4.42	-0.01	4.416	339	5			
5.300	5.320	JOR. ROYALHOLD. INDS.	-	0.00	9	2350	1227	5.30	5.40	5.50	5.52	-0.01	5.522	078	2			
5.500	5.500	JOR. WOOD INDUS. INVCO	29.5	1.82	1	1500	8250	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	-0.00	5.500	100	1			
1.140	0.990	BATEL CABLE WIRE INFC	25.3	0.00	43	43960	65610	1.02	1.08	1.02	1.05	-0.03	1.017	086	5			
1.580	1.550	JOR. SULPHON. CHEM.	15.8	0.00	11	32750	1810	1.55	1.51	1.54	1.57	-0.02	1.552	116	5			
1.250	1.180	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	15.8	5.65	10	36700	77197	1.20	1.26	1.11	1.24	-0.04	1.231	016	5			
0.500	0.500	KAWTHER INVEST.	55.2	0.00	1	300	148	0.50	0.56	0.56	0.56	-0.02	0.540	015	1			
0.840	0.820	UNIV. MOH. INDS.	28.7	4.25	109	137550	113194	0.83	0.87	0.81	0.85	-0.02	0.851	218	5			
0.750	0.710	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	10.0	13.51	24	23850	17389	0.73	0.74	0.73	0.74	-0.01	0.739	298	4			
1.500	1.450	NATL. CHLORINE	11.7	6.89	6	428	922	1.44	1.46	1.44	1.45	-0.01	1.445	009	3			
0.910	0.890	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	47	64325	39773	0.90	0.90	0.89	0.90	-0.01	0.891	554	5			
1.340	1.290	EL-KAY REAY REFIN.	44.5	0.00	11	14650	14602	1.22	1.32	1.32	1.32	-0.01	1.320	198	4			
1.110	1.110	TORICO	0.00	0.00	1	100	1211	1.20	1.17	1.20	1.11	-0.07	1.149	109	3			
1.070	1.080	UNION DEV. & VEG.	45.5	0.00	2	10250	10250	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.00	-0.02	1.000	028	1			
0.700	0.480	JORDAN STEEL	31.2	7.25	48	52493	35919	0.48	0.69	0.66	0.69	-0.01	0.684	350	5			
0.440	0.400	EAST COMPLEX	14.4	14.13	39	31800	19310	0.42	0.62	0.60	0.62	-0.02	0.607	145	5			
INDUSTRIAL															CHANGE: 1.0 - 0.461			
1107	79622						1573406											
GRAND TOTAL															CHANGE: 1.0 - 0.397			
1781	1573462						4370096											
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADING VOLUME: JD 834,018																		
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADED SHARES: 114,788																		
DAILY AVERAGE OF CONTRACTS: 354																		
PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD 14/02/1998 - 19/02/1998 WEEKLY REPORT																		
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES EXERCISED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS			
HIGH	LOW																	
16.000	16.000	PARALLEL F&M INVT. 75%	-	0.00	5	40000	7884	16.00	19.7	19.6	19.6	-0.04	17.13	020	2			
1.000	1.000	PARALLEL TURKISH TRANS. CO.	3.7	2.61	1	100	100	36.00	36.00	35.00	34.95	-0.05	34.950	001	1			
0.710	0.710	PARALLEL CEMENT CO.	-	0.00	1	2000	400	33	33	30	30	-0.03	30.000	041	1			
0.200	0.200	PARALLEL JOR. TRADE PAC.	10.1	0.00	41	131100	50730	0.22	0.38	0.21	0.28	-0.01	0.310	224	5			
0.440	0.440	PARALLEL COMMER. CENTERS	-	0.00	15	33200	15717	0.42	0.60	0.51	0.51	-0.12	0.529	064	4			
0.620	0.620	PARALLEL ARAB F&M INVEST.	-	0.00	78	94700	42265	0.45	0.47	0.43	0.44	-0.01	0.439	064	5			
0.710	0.710	PARALLEL INV. CO. 50%	0.00	0.00	79	441485	88771	0.70	0.70	0.69	0.69	-0.01	0.690	016	2			
0.700	0.490	AL-DAMLIYAN 15%	45.2	0.00	3	2192	943	0.49	0.68	0.48	0.48	-0.01	0.420	014	1			
0.940	0.920	AL-SHAUD INV. CO.	321.4	0.00	6	63600	61688	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.92	-0.01	0.920	573	4			
1.000	0.880	ARAB JOR. INVEST. CO.	-	0.00	1	4500000	450000	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-0.00	1.000	4500	3			
0.250	0.410	ARAB FOOD & RES.	0.00	0.00	21	18194	6459	0.40	0.65	0.40	0.74	-0.07	0.400	041	3			
0.290	0.240	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	28.8	0.00	27	65600	15747	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	-0.01	0.240	1332	2			
0.240	0.150	JOR. INDS. MATCH-JENCO	-	0.00	5	3400	512	0.15	0.14	0.15	0.16	-0.01	0.151	200	2			
0.280	0.300	MAJ. TEXTILE	-	0.00	3	750	210	0.30	0.28	0.28	0.28	-0.02	0.280	030	1			
0.340	0.340	PARALLEL OILS & NOILES	-	0.00	1	750	248	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	-0.01	0.331	050	1			
0.610	0.410	MIDWEST PHARM. 90%	-	0.00	10	1550	3953	0.41	0.61	0.41	0.61	-0.01	0.510	082	4			
1.380	1.160	UNION TOBACCO 75%	-	0.00	3	850	448											

African Nations Cup Goal jamboree expected between Ivory Coast and Egypt

OUAGADOUGOU (AFP) — A real goal jamboree is expected in the Ivory Coast v Egypt African Nations Cup quarter-final on Saturday if the countries' previous matches are anything to go by.

Ivory Coast's attacking duo Joel Tshie and Ibrahim Bakayoko have slammed home an impressive six of their side's 10 goals so far in the tournament.

And Egypt's veteran striker Hosam Hassan is top scorer in the event with five goals and there is no sign of his spree drying up. Tshie, however, appears not to be obsessed with becoming the top scorer in the finals.

"I'm certainly not paying much attention to it," Tshie said.

"But if I become the best marksman here all well and good," he added.

Ivory Coast will have good support in Ouagadougou's Municipal stadium (2000 GMT) owing to Burkina Faso's proximity as Ivory Coast's northern neighbour.

Omens are good for Ivory Coast as the last time the tournament was held in West Africa — in Senegal six years ago — they beat Ghana in the final on penalties in their first ever triumph.

However Ivory Coast were eliminated from the opening stages in the 1996 championship and coach Robert Nounou will want to make amends for that. But they are up against Egypt, who have made a record 15 finals appearances, and winning the tournament this year would give them a record-equalling four trophies along with Ghana. Top players such as Werder Bremen sweeper Hani Ramzy and Udinese striker Hazem Emam certainly mean the quality is there for them to go all the way.

Media pressure has been building back in Egypt to relive the glory days of their last African Nations Cup triumph in 1986 and their World Cup finals appearance in Italy four years later. The winner of this quarter-final comes up against either Tunisia or Burkina Faso, who play in the 4th August stadium in Ouagadougou just hours earlier on Saturday at 1600 GMT.

Home advantage offers Burkina Faso hope against Tunisia

OUAGADOUGOU (AFP) — World Cup qualifiers and 1996 African Nations Cup silver medalists Tunisia would be expected to defeat Burkina Faso almost anywhere in Africa.

Anywhere except the Chinese-built August 4 Stadium in the Burkina capital, which has witnessed some remarkable events since the biennial African showpiece kicked off two weeks ago.

Ghana, champions a record four times and one of the favourites here, were eliminated by no-hopers Democratic Republic of Congo at the national stadium in midweek.

Burkina Faso, a transformed team since the arrival last year of French coach Philippe Troussier, will be hoping to take a leaf from the Congolese book on Saturday afternoon.

"Everyone knows that in a cup it is not always the best team that wins," warns the

'White Witchdoctor' as he prepares for a quarter-finals showdown with the North Africans.

Troussier, who takes charge of the South African World Cup squad from March 1, made a place among the last eight his bottom line for Burkina Faso and the goal was achieved with a mix of spirit and luck.

Even in temperatures touching 40 degrees, his players swarm about the pitch like bees whose hive has been disturbed, only to be let down by unimaginative finishing.

This was particularly evident in the opening match with Cameroon, who snatched an early goal and then comfortably contained a Stallions side lacking leading scorer Mamadou Zongo.

The teenage star who plays for leading Ivory Coast club ASEC was ruled out of the Nations Cup by

an ankle injury and his flair and finishing have been sadly missed.

Burkina Faso ended a seven-match losing streak spanning 20 years of the competition by defeating Algeria 2-1 with a harsh penalty award playing a significant role.

German-based Kassoum Ouedraogo converted the spot kick and Seydou Traore, who plays in a French amateur league, capped a superb performance with a goal as the Stallions stormed back into contention.

Needing a victory over unbeaten Guinea in the final series of pool games, Burkina supporters endured 85 tense minutes before Romeo Kambou became the darling of his country with the only goal.

Tunisia, drawn with Colombia, England and Romania at the World Cup in France, also lost their opening match to Ghana

before clawing back with unconvincing victories over DR Congo and Togo.

"We began slowly due to fitness problems and I am not satisfied because the team has not corresponded to the quality of the players," says Henri Kasperczak, the experienced Franco-Pole coach of Tunisia.

The biggest disappointment has been German-based midfielder Zoubir Beya. Outstanding at the previous finals in South Africa, he was substituted twice here before being axed for the crunch clash with Togo.

The attack has also presented problems for Kasperczak, the longest-serving national coach in Africa, with shaven-haired winger Hassan Gabi often overshadowing strikers Mehdi Ben Slimane and Ziad Tlemcani.

Komen dances to 5,000m indoor record

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Kenya's Daniel Komen danced his way to a new 5,000 metres indoor world record at the international meeting here on Thursday.

Komen's time of 12min 51.48sec easily eclipsed the former record of 12:59.04 set by Ethiopia's Haile Gebrselassie here on February 20, 1997.

And the Kenyan, who also broke the 3,000m indoor world record earlier this month, said he had used the music in the indoor arena here to find his world-record breaking rhythm.

"I was really on form tonight and about halfway through I heard the music (in the hall) and that gave me my rhythm. That proved enough on its own but I know I could have run even faster."

Komen then threw down the gauntlet to multi-record holder Gebrselassie when asked if he thought he was now the best athlete in the world.

"Yes, I think so," was the Kenyan's reply. Komen added that he hoped to lower the record to 12:35 soon.

Appelmans derails Graf comeback

HANOVER (AFP) — Sabine Appelmans of Belgium derailed Steffi Graf's comeback when she beat the German 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) Thursday in the quarter-finals of the WTA Tour event here.

Appelmans kept her nerve after second-seeded Graf fought back from 2-5 down in the second set and won on her fourth match point.

"I'm still lacking confidence," admitted Graf afterwards. "But at least I now know what I've got to work on."

The former World No. 1 on Wednesday had registered her first singles victory since her return from injury by beating fellow German Andrea Glass in the second round.

Graf, 28, who hadn't played since undergoing a knee operation shortly after last year's French Open in June, played with her lower left leg heavily strapped and made a more errors than is usual.

The large crowd lifted the 21-time Grand Slam singles champion who she fell behind in the second set and she responded to the encouragement, staving off two match points and breaking back to 4-5.

Appelmans, 25, surged 6-4 ahead in the tiebreaker, however, and although Graf saved the third match point, she then sent a forehand wide to give world No. 24 Appelmans the win.

"Appelmans played smart tennis, mixing up her game up and keeping Graf on the move."

French player Mary Pierce, meanwhile, withdrew from her second-round match against Russia's Anna Kournikova. Pierce, winner of last week's Paris Open, said she was suffering from bronchitis.

Kournikova will play Germany's Wiltrud Probst.

Equestrian team competes in Beirut friendly

By Omar Karmi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Some of Jordan's top show jumpers are now in Beirut for a two-day friendly equestrian horse show grouping participants from Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Headed by Ibrahim Bisharat, the riders Hussam Bahu, Hani, Maysem and Ibrahim Bisharat jr., Hanan Hilayel, Sireen Rasekh, Sireen Naser, and Fares Taber are ready to fly the flag for Jordan in this preliminary to the 1998 international season. The trainer is Falah Hassoun.

Meanwhile, Ghassan Qassar, one of Jordan's top international show jumpers, is recovering in hospital after being involved in an horrific accident at the international show-jumping event in Jerez, Spain last week, also attended by HRH Princess Haya.

He suffered a cracked skull when, whilst going from one arena to another, the horse he was walking behind suddenly kicked back catching Qassar unaware. Emergency services were quickly alerted, and he was rushed to the hospital, where he spent four days in a critical condition in the intensive unit.

Qassar, who is in Europe for a planned 3 months in order to train, had put in a great showing, lying in 20th position from 125 riders, with a clear round and only four seconds adrift of the leader.

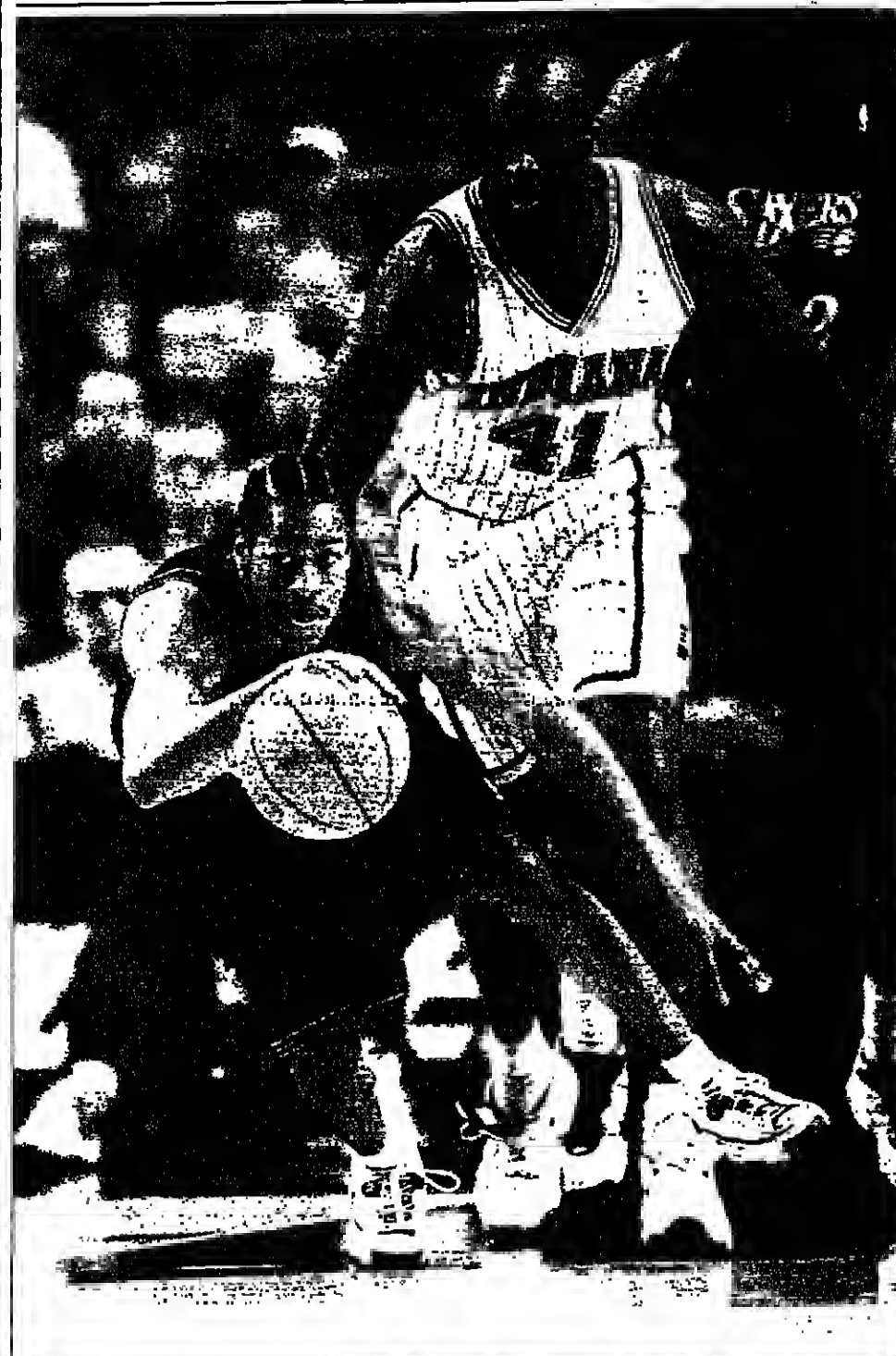
Last year in the Jordan Championship, he came second to Hani Bisharat, whom he beat to gain third from 36 riders at the Volvo Championships in Turkey.

Princess Haya also completed clear rounds on two horses in the three classes she is participating in. The tournament, which started on the 6th of February will finish March 2.

In further developments, the endurance race season starts in Aqaba next month. The 60 km race will be a qualifier for October's 120km international in Amman.

This is the first of two qualifiers, the second taking place in June, and is intended, eventually, to prepare horses for the longer distances, that the World Cup is run over.

The first qualifier for the World Cup is on Feb. 23 in Abu Dhabi, which will also host another one in December. Jordan has no entries, but will go along as observers as they prepare to take on the massive 160km distance this is run over.



Philadelphia 76er guard Allen Iverson chases down a loose ball February 19 against the Indiana Pacers in Market Square Arena. Pacers center Mark West (41) stands behind Iverson (Reuters photo)

Knee injury hobbles Spurs centre

DALLAS (AFP) — The San Antonio Spurs knew All-Star center David Robinson would miss Thursday's road game against the Dallas Mavericks, but now they are unsure exactly when he will return.

Robinson sat out Tuesday's 95-94 home victory over the Detroit Pistons due to a sore right knee and was expected to miss Thursday's game.

But doctors found Thursday that Robinson is suffering from an inflamed knee injury called chondromalacia and he will have to be examined again on Thursday to determine if he will miss further action.

The knee injury became apparent in Saturday's 94-81 loss to the Phoenix Suns when Robinson played just 17 minutes and had to sit out the second half. He had played in all 50 games this season until missing Tuesday's contest.

Robinson, selected to this year's All-Star Game as a reserve, is averaging 22.7 points and 11.0 rebounds over the season. He and rookie All-Star Tim Duncan have formed a formidable duo in the frontcourt that has led the Spurs to a 35-16 record, tied with Phoenix for fourth place in the Western Conference.

Robinson, 32, is sixth in the league in scoring and rebounding, seventh in

field-goal percentage and tied with Duncan for eighth in blocked shots. Foot and back injuries forced him to miss all but six games last season, during which he needed to undergo surgery on his left foot.

Will Perdue, who had been starting at forward, moved to center for Tuesday's win over Dallas. Despite going with a three-guard starting lineup that included Jareo Jackson, Vinny Del Negro and Avery Johnson, San Antonio still owned a 39-28 edge on the boards in soaping a two-game skid.

Rafter fights past Pioline in straight sets

ANTWERP (AFP) — Crowd pleaser Patrick Rafter booked a place in the quarter-finals of the \$1 million European Community Championship Thursday night 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) after briefly losing his way against Frenchman Cedric Pioline.

The World No. 3 from Australia got the Belgian crowd at the Sportpaleis seriously worked up on his way to victory, his third out of four matches with the two-time Wimbledon finalist.

Female teenage screams were particularly evident when the 25-year-old second seed made a shirt change, switching from red to a darker shade in the second set.

Rafter had a mental lapse while leading 5-1 in the opening set against No. 18 Pioline and had to wake up when the Frenchman reached 4-5 from two breaks of the Aussie.

Rafter broke to win the opener and maintained momentum through the second-set tiebreaker. He next plays American Jeff Tarango Friday night.

"I was cruising along and my intensity dropped a bit," said Rafter, who will face a rematch of the Australian Open first round against Tarango.

"He took advantage then. I couldn't seem to win the first point of a game. But at 5-4, I told myself 'no worries' and got back into it."

"I went out there to enjoy myself. That's what I'm hoping



Patrick Rafter

ing to do at every match this year. I played some great tennis in this match, especially on the big points."

Fifth seed Greg Rusedski came through a drama-filled, third-set tiebreaker to knock France's Guillaume Raoux out of 7-6 (8/6), 3-6, 7-6 (15/13) in their second-round contest.

The Briton saved five match points while missing out on four match-winning chances of his own. Rusedski staged a fightback from 1-5 down in the final tiebreaker

and had 17 aces overall.

"It was the closest shave of my career," he admitted. "I was out of the match and I got back in. I don't think I could have done it had it been 1-6. I kept fighting and fortunately it turned around my way today."

Defending champion Marc Rosset won his third straight match against Yevgeny Kafelnikov, ousting the fourth-seeded Russian 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 to move into the quarter-finals.

The victory was especially

beneficial for the Swiss winner, whose only title from 1997 came here a year ago over Briton Tim Henman.

Rosset automatically advances into the semi-finals after Friday round opponent, Swede Magnus Larsson, withdrew Thursday with a stretched ligament in his left ankle suffered in a Wednesday night win against Dutchman Jan Siemerink.

Rosset, the 1992 Olympic champion who now stands 26th in the world last lost to No. 6 Kafelnikov in 1996. He won twice in the series last year, at home in Gstaad and in Tashkent in a semi-final.

The Swiss dropped the first set but quickly righted himself, coming back for victory with a break for 4-2 in the third game and advancing on the first of two match points.

Rosset reached the final last week in St. Petersburg while Kafelnikov was beaten in a title match in Marseille a fortnight ago by Swede Thomas Enqvist.

"I have confidence after last week," said Rosset. "And I also have a psychological edge over Yevgeny after three straight wins. I was out on best form, but it was enough to win."

Swede Thomas Johansson beat Czech Martin Damm 6-2, 6-4 while defeated Magnus Norman of Sweden, 7-6 (7-2), 6-2 to reach the quarters in his first Antwerp appearance.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 5699238	CINEMA TEL: 5677420	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 2	GALLERIA 1	NOW ON DAILY
	Pierce Brosnan as James Bond 007...TOMORROW NEVER DIES Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	DRAGON HEART Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 PINOCCHIO Shows: 12:30 only	John Travolta in BROKEN ARROW Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD -1- Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD -2- MR. BEAN Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 MORNING SHOWS 101 DALMATIANS	ABDOUN Brad Pitt...in SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45	THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas For reservations call: 640155, 625153

Palestinians continue pro-Iraqi protests; PNA wishes Annan success

PNA detains press photographers, closes down TV stations

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAELI SOLDIERS fired tear gas Friday to disperse dozens of masked Palestinian teenagers who threw stones, burned tyres and blocked a main road with boulders in a show of support for Iraq.

The confrontation in Beit Fajjar, a remote village in the southern West Bank, began after Muslim noon prayers. Several dozen teenagers burned tyres on the main road and hocked it with boulders, hoping to draw Israeli soldiers to the village.

When two army jeeps arrived about an hour later, the youths threw stones at the soldiers who responded with tear gas.

In the West Bank town of Bethlehem, Palestinian police were deployed outside mosques to prevent marches after noon prayers.

Palestinian security forces were also deployed at all roads leading to the Israeli-controlled enclave of Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem to prevent possible clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli soldiers.

Two press photographers were arrested by Palestinian police on Friday while covering a pro-Iraqi demonstration in the West

Bank, witnesses said.

Jafar Ashtieh, 30, who was covering the event for Agence France-Presse, and his cousin Nasser Ashtieh, 28, a stringer for the Associated Press, were seized and taken to a police station in Nablus.

Around 1,500 Palestinians joined the rally in the Balata refugee camp near Nablus, answering a call by the local branch of the Fateh movement.

Some 200 Palestinians also burned American and Israeli flags in the southern Gaza Strip village of Abu San in a demonstration of support for Iraq, witnesses said.

The self-rule authority also closed eight local television and radio stations this week, saying they needed to obtain new permits from the interior ministry to be able to broadcast.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) said it wished U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan success Friday as he headed for Baghdad in a last-ditch effort to resolve the Iraqi crisis peacefully.

"The Palestinian leadership wholeheartedly supports the efforts of Kofi Annan," the Palestinian minister for planning and international cooperation, Nabil Shaath,

told AFP.

Mr. Shaath said that while he hoped Iraq applies U.N. resolutions on disarmament its dignity must be preserved.

"The Palestinian leadership considers that all possibilities for success must be left to Annan, so that he can reach a solution which guarantees the freedom and dignity of Iraq and the applications of U.N. resolutions," he said.

Mr. Shaath criticised certain countries, which he did not name, for limiting the mandate of the U.N. secretary general.

"There are voices which are being raised to question Annan's mission and suggest it has failed even before it has begun," he said, alluding to the United States and Britain, which are taking a hard-line on U.N. weapons inspections.

"We denounce these voices, which want to spread pessimism about the possibility of a political solution and encourage a military solution," he said.

Witnesses said the demonstration in Abu San was organised by Fateh, the principal group of the Palestine Liberation Organisation headed by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. Police did not interfere with the demonstration.

Ramon denies statement on Palestinian state in Jordan

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Member of Knesset and Israeli Labour Party high ranking official, Haim Ramon, has denied that he said a Palestinian state in Jordan was "inevitable."

Mr. Ramon told Jordanian and Palestinian journalists and lawyers during a seminar in Bet Berl last week that what he meant was a federation between Jordan and the West Bank and Gaza will happen in the future due to the "demographic and social makeup of both societies."

In answer to a question he said that a Palestinian state would take shape before the federation between the two countries.

The London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat quoted Mr. Ramon in December as saying that "it is inevitable that Jordan will become a Palestinian state, perhaps within ten years," and that he no longer differed with the assessment of Likud Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his hawkish Minister of Infrastructure Ariel Sharon, on this matter.

Asked to elaborate on his

statement, Mr. Ramon said: "no less than 70 per cent of the population of Jordan is Palestinian, and (the Kingdom) would be forced to accept the idea of setting up a federal or confederal union with parts of the West Bank under Palestinian, Israeli and international pressure."

He said that Jordan would become a "Palestinian state which would include parts of the West Bank."

The reported comments shocked many in Amman who had hoped that the "Jordan is Palestine" option was hurried with the signing of the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. Mr. Ramon's comments were viewed as especially significant coming from a Labour Party leader.

Mr. Ramon, who has formerly held the positions of minister of interior and minister of health under the premiership of Yitzhak Rabin and head of the Histadrut, told the Jordan Times that the opposition Labour Party has not drawn its own "security maps," outlining Israel's final status borders.

They have not been outlined, he said, because the Labour Party believes that this should

be negotiated during final status talks.

He pointed out, however, that although there was no absolute consensus within the Labour Party on this issue, the majority agreed on certain "principles" of what the borders would look like.

The Jordan Valley belt and "major settlements" would be retained, he said. He insisted however that there is a difference in thinking on the matter between Labour and the Likud.

Likud leaders want Israel to retain a 5-20 kilometres strip of land along the West Bank of the Jordan River.

But Mr. Ramon said the Labour Party was not talking about Israeli sovereignty on the Jordan Valley belt. Instead, the idea was to have an arrangement with the Palestinians whereby Israel would have a presence there for a period of time, perhaps 10-15 years, after which it would reassess the situation.

On the stalled Middle East peace process, Mr. Ramon said that even if the Palestinians complied fully with the Oslo accords, still, Mr. Netanyahu would not stick to his side of the bargain.

Britain to grant aid for Sudan's civil war victims

NAIROBI (AFP) — Britain said Friday it will grant Sudan \$6.66 million through U.N. agencies to help Sudanese civil war victims.

A press statement from the British high commission, or embassy, said the grant pledge to the 1998 U.N. appeal for Sudan will help more than four million displaced Sudanese in southern Sudan and those living in refugee camps near Khartoum in the north.

A total of \$3.16 million would go to the U.N. World Food Programme and \$3 million to non-food emergency assistance through U.N. and international non-governmental agencies.

Another \$300,000 would go to the U.N. Humanitarian Coordination Unit in Khartoum and \$200,000 to the World Health Organisation Global Polio Eradication Programme in southern Sudan.

According to the statement, the British aid would be delivered under the auspices of the U.N. Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) — a body created through an agreement negotiated between the U.N. and the Sudanese government to assist internally displaced and war-affected civilians in Sudan.

The aid is channelled mainly through international non-governmental organisations and U.N. agencies, registered under the OLS agreement and framework, working in the field and targeting at the most urgent needs identified by the aid agencies.

Last year, Britain granted more than \$5 million in food through the British aid agency Oxfam and the International Committee of the Red Cross for the population of the Red Sea Hills and those in North Kordofan and South Darfur through the U.N. Children's Fund and CARE, the statement said. Britain's bilateral development programme to Sudan was terminated in January 1991 because of concerns about the country's human rights, economic mismanagement, terrorism and continuing civil war in the south.



SANCTIONS HIT PEOPLE: A malnourished Iraqi mother sits with her prematurely born son Ahmed Mustafa in a Baghdad children's hospital on Friday. U.N. officials say nearly one third of Iraqi children are malnourished after more than seven years of trade sanctions imposed on Iraq (Reuters photo)

Sinn Fein thrown out of Ireland peace talks

BELFAST (AFP) — Five months after its historic entry into the Northern Ireland peace talks, the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein, was forced out Friday, throwing the process into fresh uncertainty.

Despite furious protests and a last-ditch court battle, the Republican Party was suspended till March 9 by London and Dublin because of two murders blamed on the paramilitary group.

The IRA's ceasefire declared in July last year allowed the party to enter the talks aimed at finding a political solution to the British-ruled province's troubles.

The suspension, widely

anticipated, nevertheless sent shockwaves through the province.

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams branded it "disgraceful" and called for peaceful Republican demonstrations.

The move also rekindled fears about the reaction of the IRA itself.

Mr. Adams said he was seeking urgent meetings with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Irish counterpart Bertie Ahern "to discuss with them the crisis caused by today's decision."

But he said Sinn Fein was dropping its legal battle to prevent its exclusion from the talks.

Predictably the short per-

iod of the expulsion infuriated the pro-British Protestant parties who dismissed Sinn Fein's punishment as nothing more than a slap on the wrist.

The Protestant Ulster Democratic Party has been excluded from negotiations for the past four weeks after its associated militia, the Ulster Freedom Fighters, admitted they carried out three killings during January.

They have been told they will be allowed back in from Monday.

Unionist spokesman John Taylor said letting Sinn Fein back into the talks.

(Continued on page 7)

200 million get chance to vote in second phase of Indian polls

Rioting erupts again in Muslim shrine city

Combined agency dispatches

MORE THAN 200 million voters are eligible to cast their ballots Sunday in the second phase of national elections in the world's largest democracy, an official communiqué said Friday.

It said the largest number, 38 million, were listed to vote in Uttar Pradesh state, regarded as India's political heartland.

The state, a sprawling region of 140 million people, elects 85 of India's 545 members of parliament, the most of all India's

25 provinces. It has given India eight of its 12 prime ministers.

Sunday's voting will take place across 10 states. The final days of balloting are on Feb. 28 and March 7.

More than 25 million people were registered Sunday to vote in the western state of Maharashtra, India's most industrialised province.

Balloting will also be held in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu as well as West Bengal in eastern India, a Marxist bastion for over two decades.

Meanwhile, India's election

commission Friday cancelled election results in the country's most volatile constituency, officials said.

The poll panel declared the elections in the eastern city of Patna "null and void" because of large-scale fraud in Monday's balloting in the region, one of India's largest cities, the officials said.

The autonomous panel also ordered the transfer of the city police chief and administrator, blaming the two top officials

(Continued on page 7)

Lewinsky's father: She didn't make it up, prosecutor overstepping bounds

WASHINGTON (AP) — Monica Lewinsky's father lashed out at prosecutors who interrogated her about an alleged affair with U.S. President Bill Clinton as the president's lawyers considered Thursday whether to invoke "executive privilege" to restrict questioning of the president's close confidants.

Breaking his silence, Bernard Lewinsky of Beverly Hills, California, told ABC-TV interviewer Barbara Walters that he "can't imagine" his daughter would fabricate her relationship with Mr. Clinton.

Dr. Lewinsky, in excerpts of the interview to be broadcast on ABC's "20/20" Friday night, accused independent council Kenneth Starr of Nazi-era tactics.

Mr. Clinton, meanwhile, confirmed that his lawyers were considering whether to invoke executive privilege, which past presidents have used to avoid having White House personnel answer certain questions about the president. The legal position is rooted in the idea that the president's power conduct of his office needs to be protected from probes by the other separate

branches of government, the judiciary and the Congress.

"It is my understanding the White House Counsel is trying to resolve the issue today," Mr. Clinton said, declining to discuss it further.

The issue surfaced as presidential confidant Bruce Lindsey testified for a second day in Mr. Starr's investigation into an alleged sexual relationship between Ms. Lewinsky and Mr. Clinton.

"Lay off" Ms. Lewinsky's

(Continued on page 7)

Frustrated Japanese man on plane bites woman

TOKYO (AFP) — A frustrated Japanese man on a flight from Seoul, angered by a fellow passenger's repeated refusal to disclose her telephone number, savagely bit her on the arm, police said. While on the Japan Airlines flight to Tokyo, Jiro Zennyoji repeatedly asked for her telephone number, a police official said. Angered by her refusal, the 51-year-old bit her on the right arm, inflicting injuries that required two weeks' medical treatment, police alleged. The man and his victim had not met before the incident.

Raquel Welch hounded out of Vienna ball

VIENNA (AFP) — U.S. film star Raquel Welch left Vienna's glamorous Opera Ball early Friday after being hounded by paparazzi with few other celebrities to chase. The 58-year-old actress, invited to the ball by a Vienna businessman, left shortly after midnight after cameramen persistently followed her at the \$210-a-ticket event, said an AFP correspondent. The ball's guest-list was the subject of frenzied speculation for weeks. Topping the hoped-for list were Richard Gere and Priscilla Presley. Neither turned up, leaving Welch the sole international-level star present.

Valentine card costs hubby \$4.8 million

LONDON (AFP) — A \$1.6 investment in a St. Valentine's Day card for his wife cost a British husband \$4.8 million this week. Sala Sid, 47, from Orpington, southern England, plays the same numbers on Britain's national lottery each week but last week decided to spend his pound stake on a Valentine's day card for his wife instead. Unfortunately for him his six numbers came up. Family joy was shortlived as a crestfallen Sid admitted he had not bought a ticket but bought a card for his wife Zohra, 36. "I'm not sure my three children will ever forgive me," said Sid, a radio presenter. But his wife has. Sid plans to continue playing the lottery, but with different numbers.

Thousands of carnival clowns invade German city halls

BONN (AFP) — Thousands of German carnival clowns flocked into city halls in Bonn, Cologne, Düsseldorf and Aachen on Thursday, as part of a week of fancy-dress celebrations involving even Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The carnival week got underway on Wednesday as 25 delegations of clowns made their way into Kohl's offices in Bonn. "A candidate for the chancellorship should be able to put up with that," Kohl laughed. In Thursday's city hall invasions, which took place at exactly 11:11 a.m. as dictated by carnival tradition, clowns brandished giant scissors to snip off the ties of startled mayors who would then hand over the keys to the offices.

Man rescued after parrot mimics cries for help

CHEDDAR (AFP) — A British man trapped when his van rolled forward and pinned him to the ground was rescued when a parrot mimicked his cries for help, he said. Richard Stone, 58, faced a long and agonising wait for help at a vegetable patch he was tending until a red, blue and green macaw parrot called Sonny in a cage at a nearby caravan park heard his cries and repeated them. Two passers-by heard the parrot and freed Stone.